*Photo* *Lallie Charles.*

The roses twining in her hair
  And underneath her hat
Would give her a coquettish air
Were she not good as she is fair
  (I'd stake my life on *that*).
And so, with flower-entwisted locks,
She beams on us—a paradox.



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**"LOVE YOU BEST, MUMMY."**

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# FROM · THE · STALLS

## GABRIELLE RAY.

*A Dark-Eyed Beauty.*

Miss Gabrielle Ray was once asked to write a short story and, distrusting her own powers, went to several clever men of her acquaintance and implored their assistance.

But, though some of them were noted after-dinner story-tellers, they one and all proved the dullest of dogs so far as Miss Ray was concerned.

Dull, indeed, they must have been if uninspired by an appeal from her pretty dark eyes.

The end of it was she had to write the story herself.

Miss Ray is a very sweet girl, but shy with strangers.

She is tender-hearted, too, and once when some children were taken off the stage by an inspector because they were too young for the law's requirements, she mingled her tears with theirs.

*Photo* *Ellis & Walery.*

## LOUIE POUNDS.

*One of Our Cleverest Actresses.*

Sammy! Oh! Oh! Oh! Sammy!
For you I'm pining when we're apart.

And if Miss Louie Pounds pined for Sammy, certainly Sammy pined night after night after Miss Louie Pounds.

For nearly 400 performances of "The Earl and the Girl," Sammy, represented by a certain box-full of young sparks, inundated Miss Pounds with flowers, gollywogs, mechanical toys, and sometimes monkeys—why monkeys Miss Pounds does not quite know, unless it was a reference to the fact that "Sammy" was on every barrel-organ during the run of the piece.

*Photo* *Barnard.*

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*Photo* *Stage Pictorial Publishing Co.*

## W. H. BERRY.

*One of George Edwardes' Accidental "Discoveries."*

Mr. W. H. Berry's career is suggestive of the fact that a comedian of the highest ability may languish in humble obscurity for years without getting a chance of coming before the great British public.

Here is a man of thirty-six, but it was only about a year ago that Mr. George Edwardes discovered him singing in the open-air at Broadstairs.

He sustained a leading *rôle* in "Les Merveilleuses" at Daly's. His song, "It Comes From An Authoritative Source" is certainly the song of the piece, and is always called for again and again.

No one grudges Mr. Berry his success. Already he is a popular idol in stage circles, especially among his fair comrades, who bombard him with telegrams of congratulation and send in their autograph books for his signature.

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*Photo* *Foulsham & Banfield.*

## ISABEL JAY.

*Who Was Also Accidentally Discovered.*

The credit of discovering Miss Isabel Jay belongs to Mr. Robert Newman.

Miss Jay was originally employed in the office of the Queen's Hall, and one day her employer happened to overhear her hum a few bars of a song, and was immediately struck with her voice.

After a brilliant career at the Academy, she took the town by storm in Gilbert and Sullivan's operas.

Her first appearance was as Elsie Maynard in "The Yeomen of the Guard," and, despite the fact that she was so nervous that Mr. Walter Passmore had literally to push her by the shoulders on to the stage, her success was immediate.

No actress is more popular, for she has great personal charm, the index of her sympathetic nature.

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Photo Dover Street Studios.

## EVELYN BERESFORD.

*A Girl With Wonderful Hair.*

Miss Evelyn Beresford is a tall, striking-looking girl.

She is ambitious to play in good comedies instead of in musical comedies, in which her lot has latterly been cast.

"They think nothing of cutting down your lines to a word or two—of course, your money goes on just the same; but, nevertheless, that kind of thing is most disheartening to me."

Miss Beresford has original ideas about the necessary qualifications of actors and actresses. Her contention is that people should not be permitted to go on the stage unless they have first passed a regular examination.

"Doctors and lawyers must do this," says Miss Beresford, "and why not actors and actresses?"

Why not? Who will pretend after this that ladies are lacking in logic?

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*Photos* *Arthur Weatherley & Co.*

## GINTARO.

*The Famous Japanese Juggler.*

Gintaro came to this country in 1887, and since then the inhabitants of the British Isles have continually enjoyed his top-spinning and conjuring, except during one or two visits paid by him to Japan – his native country.

Visitors to Maskelyne and Devant's are familiar with his wonderful feats of top-spinning and balancing, which fill the beholder with admiration and awe.

He challenges any existing juggler to rival him in these branches of the art, and, indeed, anyone wishing to excel him would have to get up early in the morning.

Gintaro, in addition to being a juggler, is also a capable exponent of Jiu-Jitsu, and demonstrates at a well-known Jiu-Jitsu school.

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*Photos H. J. Whitlock & Sons Ltd*

## HETTY KING.

*Male Impersonator and . . Charming "Principal Boy."*

"My favourite amusement is my work," says Miss Hetty King, "and if you tell me that's a bull, I'll make another, and say 'my work is my play'!"

Miss King has a pretty wit, and a clear head on the burning political question of the day.

"I am neither old enough nor clever enough to judge whether women should have votes," she says, and then goes on to disprove her modest words by offering an awkward nut for a Cabinet Minister to crack:

"If a woman is not capable of voting she should be considered quite incapable of paying taxes!"

How are you going to get round that, you Cabinet Ministers?

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# THE QUESTS of PAUL BECK.

## No. I.—THE VOICE FROM THE DEAD.

By M. McDonnell Bodkin, K.C.

*The First of a Splendid New Series of Detective Stories.*

### Introduction.

*It may be objected that among all these stories there is no record of failure on the part of Mr. Beck. The incredulous question will be asked: Was he always successful? The answer may be given in a confidential whisper; he was not; nearly always, not quite. But only his successes are published because the details are largely derived from after-dinner chats with the unconscious Mr. Beck himself. Like other people less famous he did not like to talk much about his failures. Besides, it would be hardly fair to put them into print if he did. There is another reason stronger still. Failures make dull stories. To anyone who has read his adventures it must be plain that Mr. Beck is not devoid of that natural, unaffected vanity which is one of the most agreeable of social qualities because it is so conducive to good humour. He was surprised, but he did not even pretend to be displeased, when he found himself famous. He was frankly delighted at the popularity his adventures obtained, not merely in Great Britain and Ireland, but in France, Germany, and Sweden, where they have been translated and published in sixpenny editions. It is with his express permission that the following stories are told. "They are too flattering," he said, and, unlike other people who say that, he meant it. It will be for the readers to judge if he was right.*

Plainly Mr. Beck was just about to start on a journey. Piled together in the middle of his study floor were a bulging Gladstone bag, strapped and locked, an overcoat, a travelling-rug, a salmon rod, a trout rod, and a fishing-basket.

He looked up over his shoulder from his desk where he was finishing a letter. "You might fetch a hansom, Burns," he said to his factotum, who was putting his things together.

"Yes, sir," said Burns, and started for the door.

Then the telephone bell rang in its little glass closet in the corner of the room.

"See to that, Burns. Tell whoever it is that I have gone off to the country. It's only anticipating the truth by a minute or so."

"Yes, sir."

"Halloa! Are you there? Yes; are you there?"—the usual interchanges went on.

"Yes," Mr. Beck heard Burns say. "No; gone away to the country, left no address. Cannot be done. I tell you it's impossible."

"Well?" asked Mr. Beck.

"Must see you, sir. I said you had left no address. Says someone must know where you are. Most important."

"They all say that if a teaspoon is stolen."

"She says it's a matter of life and death," said Burns.

"She?" Mr. Beck got up from his chair.

"Yes, sir; a lady's voice, particular clear and most distinct, sir."

A smile wrinkled Burns' face as he made way for his master at the telephone.

It was a lady's voice that spoke—a very pleasant voice despite the metallic twang of the instrument.

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"Mr. Beck? Is it really! Oh! I'm so glad. I knew I should find you. I want you here at once. Yes, Ringwood Castle; you know Simon Rutherford—he has been missing for two days. Yes, we have searched everywhere. I'm his daughter, his only child, Josephine Rutherford. Do please come at once. Oh! thanks ever so much."

"Burns," said Mr. Beck, ruefully turning from the telephone, "you may put those rods back. I'm not going fishing—for fish."

"But I thought, sir——"

"Never mind what you thought. Go and call a hansom and put the bag in it. I'll catch the 10.40 if you look sharp."

The case *was* important. Simon Rutherford, the millionaire, had vanished out of the palace he had built for himself on the slope of a sunny hill amid embowering trees—vanished from the midst of an army of attendants. "Here," thought Mr. Beck, as he leant back in the first-class carriage of the train that he had caught with a second to spare, "is a problem worth solving." The pleasant voice that called to him for help through the telephone made the problem more exciting.

A small electric motor waited for him at the station and bowled him along a broad, smooth road to Ringwood Castle.

For half its length the avenue of chestnut trees, which were huge cones of flower, ran up a steep incline. At a curve Mr. Beck caught sight of the Castle, and was startled by its magnificence. Mr. Rutherford, when he purchased the estate from the impoverished Lord Hazelton, had pulled down the crazy family mansion and had built Ringwood Castle on its site. He was fortunate in his architect, and in his own supreme ignorance of architecture. The stately building of grey stone, with towers massive yet graceful, that rose above the tallest of the trees, crowned the hill superbly, and harmonised with the surrounding landscape.

The motor wheeled like a swallow on the wing, and left Mr. Beck at the door.

A girl waited for him in the hall and captured him the moment he appeared. A tall girl, with the figure of Diana, and gold hair coiled like a crown on her shapely head.

"So glad you've come!" she cried impetuously, as she led him along the corridor to a spacious room that looked out through a French window on the garden. The room might have been mistaken for a bachelor's "den" but for its neatness and the absence of tobacco.

There were golf clubs, and tennis racquets, and fishing rods. But there were also a couple of book-cases with rows of standard books in honest, work-a-day binding, meant for use not show. The place, with its light wicker chairs and its spindle-shanked tables, was neat as a captain's cabin.

"Sit down there," the girl said, pushing a comfortable chair to Mr. Beck, "and let me introduce myself. I'm Miss Josephine Rutherford, only daughter of the man who has vanished. I sent for you because I needed you horribly."

Mr. Beck smiled. His eyes swept the room at one glance, and lighted on a man seated in a low chair at the corner furthest from the door.

"That's Mr. Herbert Ross, M.P. He knows who you are. I don't mean to keep any secrets from you, Mr. Beck. Mr. Ross and I are engaged to be married."

Mr. Beck had already guessed her secret as he summed up the man at a glance. Tall—so far as could be judged from the loose stretch of his long limbs as he lay back in his low chair—handsome, too, after a fashion; a dark, intelligent, keen face alive with intense earnestness—the face of a man not easily to be baulked in anything he had set his heart on.

His dark eyes searched the face of the detective, who nodded and smiled at the introduction.

"Mr. Ross belongs to what I have to say, Mr. Beck," Miss Rutherford went on. "I'll say it as quick as I can, because I may be interrupted.

"We met first—Mr. Ross and myself—when he came down here to contest the seat against father and won it. I went to one of his meetings and liked his speech immensely. We met afterwards and became friends, and to make a long story short he liked me, and we got engaged to be married. Father was furious. Herbert is poor, of course—he is a barrister in London, and hasn't much practice yet.

"But it was not that so much which made father mad. He never could forgive one who had thwarted him, and he had set his heart on a seat in Parliament, so Herbert was forbidden the house.

"I was ordered not to write to him, an order to which I didn't pay the least attention. About a week later a young widow—at least, she said she was a widow—was brought down here to be a companion to me. You will see Lucy Lalladay presently, so I won't say a word that might prejudice you against

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her. I didn't like her, I may say that much, but father did immensely. He could do nothing without consulting her—had her constantly in his study where I was never allowed, and later went on pleasure trips to London with her. He was infatuated with her——" She broke off suddenly.

"Mr. Beck, I am as certain as I can be, myself, that this wretched woman is at the bottom of his disappearance."

"But you have told me nothing yet about his disappearance, Miss Rutherford," said Mr. Beck, ignoring the sudden onslaught on the widow.

"Oh! there is very little to tell. Father had just come home from a trip with this woman—the way she made eyes at him was disgusting! The next afternoon he was in the study alone with Mr. Mark Strangley, his private secretary. Mr. Strangley had left the room for a few moments, and when he came back my father had disappeared. Mr. Strangley thought little about it at the time.

"There is a glass door opening on the lawn, and he fancied perhaps father had gone out for a stroll. But when father didn't come in to dinner, we had a search made for him through the grounds. It was no use. Then there was another surprise. That woman confessed that they had been married a week ago in London by special license, and pretended to go into hysterics, to make matters worse. Well, we had a further search next day, but still no sign; so——"

"You sent for me," said Mr. Beck. "Anything more?"

"Oh, yes! There is another thing most important. Herbert comes to see me, of course, whenever he can spare time from his work in London—sometimes in the morning, sometimes in the evening. He was seen about the place. He is well known, and there have been whispers"

"Not to put too fine a point on it, Mr. Beck," spoke up Herbert Ross from his corner, "I am strongly suspected of having murdered Mr. Simon Rutherford."

"Father is not dead," persisted the daughter; "no one would kill him except that woman, and she couldn't if she wanted to. You will find him for us, Mr. Beck?"

"I will try," said Mr. Beck.

"Would you like to see the study now?"

"Why, certainly, but I would like just one word more with you before we go. What kind of man is this secretary? I can guess what you think of Mrs. Lalladay, or I should say Mrs. Rutherford"—the daughter winced at the name, but Mr. Beck did not seem to notice. "Now I want to know what you think of Mr. Mark Strangley?"

"Oh! he is a good sort enough; not too clever perhaps, but honest and straight as a die. For the first few days after she came I thought he was going to fall in love with the widow, but he soon found her out. Afterwards he used to laugh at her with me, and was almost as indignant as myself at the way she played upon father's folly. He even spoke to him about it, and was sharply told to mind his own business. It was Mark—Mr. Strangley I mean—that advised me to telephone for you."

Again Mr. Herbert Ross spoke straight out from his corner. "I have seen Mark Strangley only three times," he said, "and I believe him to be a thorough-paced scoundrel. Well, well, Joe," good-humouredly but firmly withal to the girl, who was about to protest, "we are not likely to agree on this point. Time may tell who's right."

Then to Mr. Beck very courteously: "I have heard of you, sir, in many quarters and always in high praise. I am glad you have come. If any man living can unravel this mystery it is you. Good-bye, Joe. I cannot stay here, you know. I have taken a room at the Star and Anchor. It's not a quarter of a mile off, Mr. Beck, and I will come at a word if you want me."

The two lovers stood for a moment together at the door. Mr. Beck happened to be busy with a note-book at the moment, and did not look up till the girl spoke to him again.

Something of the life and buoyancy was gone out of her voice and face when her lover left.

"You would like to see the study now?"

The study was a wide, airy room on the right of the hall, with a great, ebony roll-top American desk in the centre. The floor was of polished oak, with no rug or carpet to mar the rich, glossy expanse. The walls, painted a rich maroon, made an effective background for masterpieces of Romney, Gainsborough, and Reynolds—high-waisted, full-bosomed beauties, simpering seductively.

Other ornament there was none. An electric foot-warmer cushioned in furs was under the comfortable arm-chair at the desk, an electric cigar-lighter was at the writer's elbow, electric lamps—standard and suspended—were everywhere. There were half-a-dozen phonographs in the room, each perched on a little table of its own with high rubber castors that glided at a touch over the polished floor.

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Mr. Beck was on his knees on the grass sward with a magnifying glass close to the ground.

On the left of the desk was the door from the hall; to the right a large French window looked upon the lawn. Facing the writer as he sat at his desk was a huge safe ten feet square, painted, like the walls, a dark maroon, with polished brass handles.

It was the first thing that took Mr. Beck's attention. He walked straight to it and tried the handle.

"Locked," said Miss Josephine; "my father had the key when he disappeared. Oh! is that you, Mark; how quietly you come in! Mr. Beck, this is my father's secretary, Mr. Strangley, who asked me to send for you."

Mr. Beck's genial smile expressed his gratitude while his keen eyes studied Mr. Mark Strangley.

It was an easy book to read. The figure of an athlete, clean and strong, a handsome face, blue-eyed, flaxen-haired, not too clever, and boyish for his age, which might be thirty. This was Mark Strangley as Mr. Beck first saw him.

"Glad to see you, sir," he said, with hearty welcome, as he took Mr. Beck's hand in a firm grasp. "I'm glad for Miss Rutherford's sake, for all our sakes, that you have come."

Miss Rutherford seemed to hesitate for a moment. "Perhaps I'd better leave you two alone," she said.

Plainly she wanted to be asked to stay, but Mr. Beck did not ask her. On the contrary, he gallantly held the door open for her.

"You will find me in my own room when you want me," she said as she passed out.

"A charming young lady," said Mr. Beck when the door had closed.

"A queen," said Mr. Strangley, in accents of undisguised adoration; "I pity her from the bottom of my heart."

"But why pity?"

"First for the loss of her father, then:—Oh! come in"—impatiently.

There had come a timid tap to the door.

As it opened softly Mr. Strangley's impatience changed to deferential welcome. "Mrs. Lalladay," he said very gently, "I beg pardon. I should say Mrs. Rutherford; this is Mr. Beck, the famous detective, of whom you have heard me speak."

Mr. Beck, turning round, saw the most lovely woman he had ever looked at. All the old-fashioned similes were wanted to describe her: cheeks like the rose-leaf, eyes blue as the violet, hair like fine gold, alive with wave and curl. She was small, but of figure marvellously erect, lithe, delicately poised as a fairy. The winsome little lady was dressed all in black, plain, close-fitting black—a perfect foil to her rare beauty.

She divided an appealing smile between the two men.

"Is there any news?" she asked. The question was to Mr. Strangley, but Mr. Beck was not excluded.

"None yet," Mark Strangley answered, "but we must not despair. While there's life there's hope, you know. If any man

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living can find your husband Mr. Beck can and will."

"Oh, I'm so glad!" She looked Mr. Beck full in the eyes, and then gave him her hand impulsively—a white, shapely, firm little hand. As usual, his kindly face induced confidence. "They say I didn't love my husband," she complained, "because he was older than I; that I married him for his money; but it's false. I couldn't help his leaving everything to me—could I? But I loved him for himself alone, and now that I have lost him my heart is broken. We had a little quarrel that morning. I spoke in favour of his daughter and vexed him. He left me in anger, and I may never see him again." The violet eyes were bright with tears, but she held them back bravely. "I will give you everything I have in the world if you find him for me."

Beauty in distress always appealed to Mr. Beck.

"There is no use meeting trouble halfway," he said kindly. "Reward or no reward, you may be sure I'll find him if I can." He did not add "for your sake," but it was plain from his tone that he meant it.

A fleeting blush showed she knew he meant it. "I won't keep you from your work," she said. "I wish you all good luck and Godspeed."

Mark Strangley held the door open for her as she went out.

Mr. Beck's eyes were on his face. "If that man is not in love with the widow," Mr. Beck thought, "he is a very fine actor."

"Let us get to work," he said briskly, when the door closed. "There has been already too much delay."

"Won't you have lunch first?"

"No, work first, if you please—lunch later. How long were you out of the room when he disappeared?"

"About five minutes, not more."

"Could he not have gone out by the same door that you went by?"

"Impossible. He would have to pass through the room where I was looking for a paper he sent me for."

"Then he must have gone out through the glass door?"

"So it would seem, unless he went up the chimney."

Mr. Beck did not resent the sneer. "Yes," he said, "it seems quite obvious, but one cannot afford to take even the obvious for granted."

He had opened the glass door and looked out. The path ran in full view for at least a quarter of a mile.

"If he had gone that way you must have seen him when you returned," he said to Mr. Strangley, who had come up to the door and looked through over his shoulder.

"Unless he had turned in on the grass, past that clump of trees to the right," Strangley answered.

"Quite so," said Mr. Beck approvingly. "I expected you to say just that. I wonder is it too late to find any sign? Come along!"

Bending low he scrutinised the edge of the pathway closely as he walked. Twice he found a break in the clean-cut edge, examined it carefully and went on. The third time he found the mark of one of the new-fashioned, round rubber heels in the turf. The ground had been soft when the mark was made—it was hard now. The segment of the circular heel was cut deep and clear.

"Mr. Rutherford wore rubber heels," he said to the other, rather as one who makes a statement than one who asks a question.

Strangley nodded. Mr. Beck was on his knees on the grass sward with a magnifying glass close to the ground. He put the grass softly aside as a surgeon parts the hair to examine a scalp wound.

"Was Mr. Rutherford a heavy man?"

Mr. Strangley did not hear him at first, and he repeated the question. "Well, no, he was rather light and wiry, but he had big feet, if that's what you mean."

"Right," said Mr. Beck, "here is a full footmark." He got up from his knees and walked on briskly, picking up the trail as if it were the "scent" of a paper-chase, though Strangley's eyes could find only a few vague marks amongst the grass. The track skirted the woods and led them to the banks of a deep, dumb river that ran slowly, level with its brim. Along the banks of the river the track led them for about a mile, tending always away from the house.

Under the shelter of a clump of beech, Mr. Beck stopped short and began to cast about like a sporting dog that makes a dead set, weakens on it when he finds the bird has just left, and begins beating cautiously again. He examined every mark about the place with scrupulous care, went on about twenty yards to where the river was crossed by a new iron bridge, and walked a little with bent head on the further side. Mr. Strangley watched him curiously all the time till he came back at last to the place where he had first pointed his game, and looked fixedly at the water.

Then very quietly he said to Mr. Strangley:

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"Mr. Rutherford's body is out there, under the water."

Mr. Strangley gasped, and no wonder, and the colour left his face. He gazed at Mr. Beck dumfounded.

"Sure?" he asked at last in a frightened whisper.

"As sure as you and I are on the banks, he is under the water. We can do no more at present. Let us get back now and have that lunch you spoke about. After lunch we will drag the river and bring the body home."

They walked in silence by the water's edge back to the house. In the midst of the brightness of the fair scene and sunshine, of green leaf and singing birds, they were haunted by the tragedy hidden by the dark water of the deep stream that moved so stealthily under the trees.

"Say nothing to the ladies," whispered Mr. Strangley, as they went back through the French window, "until you are quite sure."

"I am quite sure," replied Mr. Beck, "but I shall say nothing."

His certainty was justified. Out of the dark depths of the river, at the very spot he pointed to, the men fished up the draggled body of Mr. Rutherford, millionaire. A horrid sight the body was as it lay there on the soft grass under the trees, while the moving boughs let the sunshine trickle through, and the birds sang unconscious of the horror. The pockets of the man's coat bulged with stones.

Again Mr. Strangley's first kindly thought was for the women.

"We must get him quietly to the house."

Mr. Beck nodded.

"Have the coroner sent for," he added; "we should have this inquest to-morrow."

The body was composed in decent state, the staring eyes closed, the grey hands crossed over the breast, before his wife and daughter were told of the ghastly discovery.

Mr. Beck watched them closely as they came, one after the other, into the room with the dead.

The daughter made no display of violent grief. She moved softly to the bedside and kissed the poor, clammy forehead with a kiss that seemed to have in it as much of forgiveness as of affection. She knelt for a moment at the bedside and went out quietly as she entered.

The widow, on the other hand, was distraught. "I loved him, I loved him," she cried continuously, "and now I shall never see him again. It was I drove him to it. I was unkind to him. I am his murderess."

From the first she assumed he had committed suicide, and the jury's verdict justified her instinct.

They found the customary verdict with the charitable addition, "during temporary insanity."

Mr. Beck's work was done, but he remained on a day or two at the special invitation of the widow, who, when the first paroxysm of her grief was passed, was lavish in childlike admiration and gratitude.

"But for you," she exclaimed, "we should never have found him. My life would have passed in a long agony of suspense. Horrible as the truth is, the suspense would have been more horrible. He would never have lain in consecrated ground. I could never have watered his grave with my tears."

Not she alone, but all the neighbourhood were full of wonder and admiration at the skill with which the detective went straight to the root of the mystery.

There was one exception—Miss Joe Rutherford was not in the least enthusiastic. If Mr. Beck expected congratulations from her when she summoned him to her bachelor's den he was disappointed.

He found her standing at the great bow window, and before she turned had time to admire the grace of that tall, pliant figure clear against the evening light. He noticed as she turned that the comely face was pale, and the eyelids red with weeping.

"Sit down," she said abruptly. "I suppose I ought to thank you, but I cannot. The thing you have done is very clever and all that. But what does it come to? You have found the body, but you have not found the cause of death."

"The coroner's jury have found that," replied Mr. Beck innocently, "as was their business, and they have found it to be suicide."

"I don't believe it; I don't believe a word of it. Do you?"

The question was a sharp home thrust—the frank eyes looked straight in his.

But Mr. Beck never winced.

"I don't see what other verdict the jury could find," he answered slowly. "The body was in the water; the footprints leading to the river were made by the boots on his feet; the doctor testified that he died of suffocation; there were no external marks on the body, except the nails and knuckles were bruised and torn, but bruised knuckles and nails don't kill a man."

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"How were they bruised and torn?"

"How can I tell? The coroner and the coroner's jury could not tell that. How can I?"

"Oh, I thought that you clever detectives knew everything."

He spread out his big hands deprecatingly like a clumsy Frenchman.

"My dear young lady, did I ever pretend to be clever, did I now? We detectives are like children with puzzle alphabets. We pick up letters here and there and try to get them in their proper order—spell out a word or two. Don't smack me if I cannot get the letters right at first. I'm doing my best all the time."

Something in the contagious good-humour of the man captured her.

Her face lightened with a smile. "Forgive me," she said, "I'm an ungrateful, selfish thing. I know you did your best—and more than anyone else could do. I'm worried—you mustn't mind me. I suppose you heard that father left all he died possessed of to his widow? Mr. Strangley drew the will, and witnessed it, and never said a word, and he pretended to be fond of me. Oh, the cur! I'm sure it was she put him up to it."

"Do you stay on here?" Mr. Beck asked sympathetically.

"Do I stay here! As if I would stay an hour longer than I could help under the same roof with that woman. I wouldn't take a crust of bread or a glass of water from her if I was starving and it was to save my life. There is an animal in India Kipling wrote about, that knows a snake the first time it sees one, and wants to kill it. I feel just like that."

"She speaks most kindly of you."

"Of course she does. Aren't snakes always slimy? She came gushing to me here. She said we were sisters in sorrow—'let us weep together on his tomb.' I answered her pretty plainly."

"I'll warrant you did," said Mr. Beck under his breath.

"But I could not vex her. Nothing I could say would vex her. She was most loving to the very last. She—she wanted to kiss me." There was a break in her voice as she said it, but not even Mr. Beck could say whether it was laughter or tears. "I am going away this evening," she went on calmly.

"Where?"

"Anywhere out of this."

"Don't go this evening. I'm staying over to-night. I may want you to-morrow."

"But," she began, but her eyes met Mr. Beck's, grave, determined, all the smile gone from his face.

"I'll stay," she said, "if you wish it."

His finger went suddenly to his lips commanding silence. Then he pointed to the door.

His ears were quicker than hers, for after a long silence there came a gentle, timid knock.

Mr. Beck turned the handle and opened the door, but he stepped aside as the young widow, more lovely than ever, more delicately *spirituelle* in her widow's weeds, came softly in.

The detective watched the high comedy of the meeting with quiet interest and amusement.

"I have returned," cooed the widow softly, with hands stretched out in sweet intreaty.

"So I see," answered the girl with implacable coldness. "May I ask why?"

"Oh! Josephine, Josephine!" cried the other plaintively, "why will you reject my love! I want to be a sister to you."

"Look here, Mrs. Lalladay, if that's your name, what's the use of telling these lies to me when you know I don't believe them; when you know that I know you hate me just as much as I hate you, and that's enough? You managed to get between my father and myself. His eyes were blinded; mine are not. I know you from your heel to your top-knot. You have got all his money. You have robbed me of that. Cannot you be satisfied? Why must you worry me as well?"

"Why will you speak in this cruel way?"

"You want to get rid of me. Well, I am going to-morrow."

"I thought you said to-night."

The widow did not seem delighted at the change.

Joe Rutherford smiled scornfully.

"Mr. Beck asked me to stay till to-morrow to have his company to London."

"I'm so glad," gushed the widow, correcting her mistake, "you have changed your mind. To-morrow I may persuade you to prolong your stay. Good-bye, dearest; good-bye, Mr. Beck, I am very grateful to you, too."

"You may have reason to be," Mr. Beck said to himself as she left the room.

"Miss Rutherford," he added aloud when the door was closed, "I would advise you to telegraph for Mr. Ross. I may have some startling news for you to-morrow. By the way, could you lend me an alarum clock?

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**Before Mr. Beck could interfere she turned the red, smoking blade on her own breast.**

You are an open-air, early-rising young lady, likely to have one. Thanks! No, no, I answer no questions until to-morrow. I never speak till I am quite sure."

The greater part of the night Mr. Beck spent in the dead man's study with the doors locked and no company but the pictures, the great safe, and the phonographs.

Mr. Strangley thought he heard loud shouting in the room, and came out in his pyjamas to reconnoitre. Mr. Beck opened the door to his knocking.

"Thought I heard shouting," Strangley said; "did you hear anything?"

"Nothing louder than my own voice," Mr. Beck returned smiling.

"Why the deuce didn't you go to your bed?" Strangley asked. "What are you doing here?"

"Thinking," Mr. Beck answered gravely. "I am pretty nearly done."

"Well, good luck, anyway. I'm off."

Next morning, when the two men were breakfasting alone, by Mr. Beck's special request, in the spacious study, Strangley reverted to the incident of the night before.

"Twopence for your thoughts, Beck," he said laughingly; "what were you pondering over last night?"

"The Rutherford mystery," Mr. Beck answered gravely.

For a moment the other seemed taken quite aback by this unexpected reply.

"But there is no mystery now," he objected; "the puzzle has been solved, thanks to you, old man; a commonplace suicide after all."

"I'm not so sure of that," Mr. Beck answered. "The evidence doesn't show how he got to the water."

"There were his own footprints leading straight to the bank."

"The footprints were heavier than so light a man could make. Besides, I found close to the place the faint trace of a stockinged foot. What if the murderer, wearing the dead man's boots, had carried the corpse on his back to the river and changed the boots to the dead man's feet before he threw it in?"

Mr. Strangley grew pale at the horrible suggestion. "But the man was drowned, suffocated," he stammered.

"He was suffocated," Mr. Beck answered, "but was he drowned? There was no water found in the lungs, and then the hands were bruised and torn as if the wretched man, trapped in a living tomb, had beaten them in vain against the iron wall." Mr. Beck's voice shook with the horror of his own imagining.

His companion was strangely affected. His face was ghastly, his eyes staring. He wiped a clammy forehead with a trembling

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hand. He seemed listening for some terrible sound.

It came! In the long pause suddenly it came.

There was quick beating of hands against the door of the great iron safe, and a faint cry of "Help! Help!" was heard, stifled and strangled by the iron walls.

Then Mark Strangley lost all self-control. "The dead speaks!" he cried, "the dead speaks! I will confess! I will confess! I murdered him! As he stood at the safe I thrust him in and slammed the door and locked it. That night I carried the body to the river. I murdered him—she enticed me to it. She had married him for his money; she hated him; she swore she would marry me when he was dead!"

The sudden opening of the door cut short his confession. The widow dashed into the room, not soft and gentle now, but tense with rage. The fury of the wild cat—fierce, untamable—flamed from her eyes.

"You lie, you coward!" she screamed, "you coward and fool! If you murdered my husband, you shall hang. I know nothing of it."

"Did you not urge me to it?"

"Never! Never!"

"And promise to marry me when he was dead?"

"Marry you, you wretched fool and craven!"

There was an infinite contempt in her voice which stung him to the quick.

"You shall pay for this, though I hang for it!"

"Do your worst, fool—do your worst! You have no scrap of writing of mine, no particle of proof. You are the murderer—you cannot turn King's evidence. I know that much law. No one will believe your lies. I defy you! I defy you!" She pointed a small, white finger at him and laughed derisively. "I defy you, and you, the wise detective, and that great, stupid ploughman-girl—curse her! I defy you all!" She turned to Beck: "I don't care a farthing whether you hang that fool there or not. I have the will. Everything is mine."

Hereupon in his turn Mark Strangley broke into loud, derisive laughter.

"If I hang, my lady, you will starve!" he cried. "You know the law, do you? Then you know that the will was revoked by marriage. You revoked it yourself when you married the man you murdered. The will is not worth the paper it is written on."

There was the ring of truth in the man's savage triumph.

The woman glared like a wild beast trapped—ready to bite and claw.

She turned again to Mr. Beck.

"Is that true?"

"Quite true."

With a snarl she sprang like a wild cat on Strangley. A knife leapt out and flashed in the sunlight as she plunged it once, twice in his heart. Before Mr. Beck could interfere she turned the red, smoking blade on her own breast, and sank beside her victim on the floor.

At that moment there came a knocking at the door.

Mr. Beck rushed to turn the key in the lock

"Who's there?" he called out.

"It's I, Joe Rutherford. You said you would have exciting news for me."

"I have. The mystery is solved, the tragedy ended," answered Mr. Beck, through the closed door. "You shall know all later."

A month later he told the strange story in detail to Joe Rutherford, heiress, and Herbert Ross, her affianced husband.

"I was right," whispered the girl, with pale lips, "I knew the woman was the murderess. I am sorry for poor Strangley."

"He got his deserts. He was the viler of the two," retorted Ross fiercely.

"But how came that voice?" queried the girl. "How came that voice from the dead to force him to confess? Did he imagine it was a real voice he heard?"

"It was very real," replied Mr. Beck. "The night before I prepared that little surprise for him. I set a phonograph in the safe with an alarum clock to start it at the right moment. I worked up to the crowning horror. I guessed the voice from the dead would drag a confession from the murderer, and I was right."

*Next Month, "TRIFLES LIGHT AS AIR," the Second Story of this Splendid Series, will appear.*



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# A Day in the Life of a Monk.

By H. M.

*This is an Absolutely Faithful Account of the Daily Round in a Monastery, Written by a Man who was for Two Years a Monk.*

THOUGH much has been said and written on the subject of Monasticism generally, it is surprising how very little is really known to the outer world of the daily routine of the "hidden" life.

For many generations the "man in the street" has regarded the life of a monk as one of selfish ease and enjoyment, its prevailing feature a round of jovial conviviality and good-fellowship, if not of more sinful excesses; an idea which, unfortunately, the art and literature of the present day has tended to foster rather than to correct.

Nothing, however, could be wider of the mark; "*Laborare est orare*" (To labour is to pray) is the watchword adopted throughout the monastic world. That this motto is no empty formula, the following brief summary of what goes to make up an ordinary working day in the cloister will leave no doubt in the reader's mind. Whatever his mediæval brother may have been in the past, the monk of to-day is by no means the useless drone popular prejudice has painted him.

Let me commence with a short description of his cell; for it is here that he receives his first summons to a round of duties consisting of eighteen hours of strenuous labour. It is little larger than an ordinary prison cell, and not nearly so comfortable. The walls are of bare stone, destitute of all ornament save a large crucifix, which arrests the eye immediately. The figure is painted in natural flesh tints, and looks very realistic in the subdued light of a lancet window of the narrowest dimensions—little more than a loophole, piercing the thick wall. The masonry is bevelled away so as to form a wide window ledge, upon which rests a well-thumbed breviary with a string of rosary beads closed between its pages.

A plain deal structure, resembling a long narrow table, flanks the wall opposite the crucifix. This is the monk's bed. There is no mattress. A pillow of chopped straw with a rug for covering is all that the Rule allows. The groined ceiling is of stone, and a small prayer-desk at the foot of the crucifix completes the furniture of this strange apartment.

Now let the reader imagine a bleak winter's morning, with the temperature well below freezing-point. A faint light penetrates the cell from the corridor without, sufficient only to outline faintly its two occupants: the silent, watchful Figure upon the Cross, and the sleeping form upon the bed. The

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latter is clad in the white, flowing cowl of the Order, the hood drawn over the head, and the hands hidden away within the ample sleeves.

It wants but a few minutes to two o'clock. Suddenly the silence is broken by the deep boom of the Matin bell—to the monk, the voice of God calling him to this service.

It is bitterly cold, and the hard plank is feeling as comfortable as the softest bed of down, but, from long habit, the white figure rises almost with the first sound, and thrusts a pair of bare feet into his ice-cold sandals. After a momentary prayer before the crucifix he hurries away to his stall in the church, three minutes only being allowed for the operation, for the office commences at two o'clock sharp.

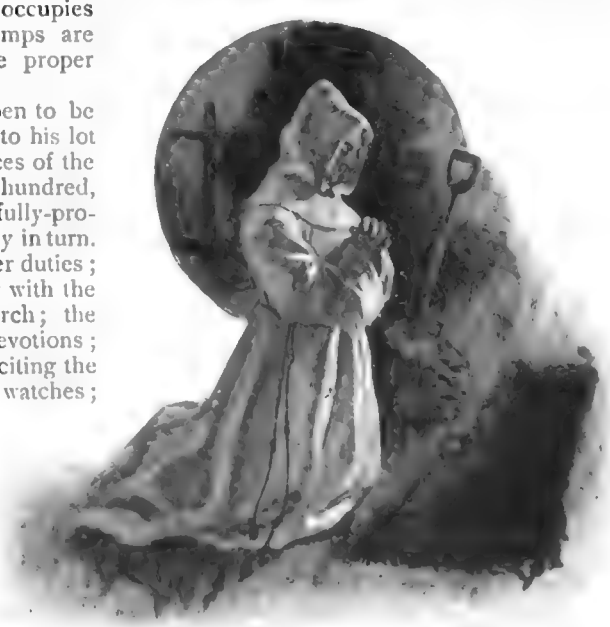
Reaching the cloisters, which look very cold in the frosty moonlight, two long rows of white, kneeling figures with bowed, tonsured heads, meet his gaze. Taking his place at the end of the line he makes his preparatory prayer for strength to recite his office "worthily, attentively, and devoutly" to God's honour and glory. This occupies only a minute; then the procession moves silently into the choir-stalls, and the first of the fourteen services which are performed during each day is commenced.

First there is what is known as the Little Office of Matins and Lauds, which is recited from memory in the dark and occupies about half-an-hour. The choir lamps are then lit and the canonical office proper begins. It concludes at 4 a.m.

Should our particular monk happen to be reader for the week, it has fallen to his lot to conduct these and all other services of the monastery, numbering nearly a hundred, during his week of office, for each fully-professed priest must undertake this duty in turn. But this also involves numerous other duties; the blessing of meat in the refectory with the concluding grace sung in the church; the conducting of many special devotions; ministering to the sick and dying; reciting the Office of the Dead during the night watches; and performing the burial service, should a death occur during his week of office; are only a few of the duties which fall within the province of the weekly reader.

To describe adequately the last phase in the monastic life would require a long article in itself. How the dying brother is taken from his bed in the infirmary, and laid in ashes strewn on the floor of the death-room, and passes away surrounded by the assembled community, who chant the office of the dying; the kneeling alone during the silent watches of the night, in the great, whispering church, at the feet of the corpse arrayed in its cowl winding sheet; the burial, when the coffinless body is consigned to the grave *the dead man has himself dug when living*—for not only does the monk dig his own grave, but, when he assumes the habit, he literally puts on his shroud—are all circumstances which go to make up a story of weird and thrilling interest.

But let us return to the church. It is now 4 a.m. and the Lauds office is just concluding. Supposing to-day is Friday, a special ceremony will be observed. I refer to the discipline, or weekly flogging, a practice which is universally enforced throughout the monastic world. The "flagellum" is an instrument consisting of nine tails of strong whipcord, each containing seven hard knots. It is about eighteen inches long, not including the handle, which is formed by plaiting the ends of the cords together. Every Friday morning, immediately after Lauds, the whole community, headed by the Abbot, retires to the dormitory. Each man entering his cell leaves the door ajar and proceeds to strip to the waist. A bell rings, and the Superior



The procession halts before the unfinished graves. Each man kneels at the brink of his own, and makes a short meditation on death.

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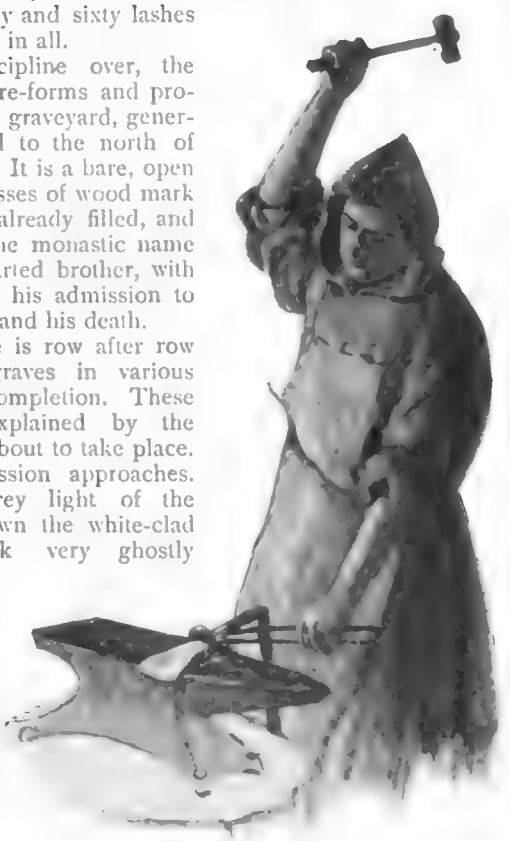
commences the recital of the *Miserere* the Latin version of the 51st Psalm. A sickening, swishing sound then proceeds from the cells in regular pulsations, as the knotted cords sink into the flesh of some hundreds of bared shoulders, from those of the Abbot himself down to the youngest of the trembling novices. As there are nineteen verses in the *Miserere* and an average of three lashes is administered during the recital of each, it follows that between fifty and sixty lashes are inflicted in all.

The discipline over, the procession re-forms and proceeds to the graveyard, generally situated to the north of the church. It is a bare, open space. Crosses of wood mark the graves already filled, and bear only the monastic name of the departed brother, with the dates of his admission to the cloister and his death.

But there is row after row of open graves in various stages of completion. These will be explained by the ceremony about to take place. The procession approaches. In the grey light of the winter's dawn the white-clad forms look very ghostly as they walk in single file under the dark stone wall of the church. The procession halts before the unfinished graves. Each man kneels at the brink of his own, and makes a short meditation on death. Then, stepping into the opening which will one day receive his body, he takes out one spadeful of earth and adds it to the mound at the side, thus marking off another step, as it were, towards eternity.



Blacksmithing, baking, weaving . . . are but a few of the various branches of industry carried on within the monastic inclosure.

This ghastly ceremony completed, the procession returns to the church, where brisk but silent preparations are proceeding at the various altars for the daily Masses. Lights begin to twinkle from many side chapels, and priests, vested in chasuble and alb, each carrying before him a veiled chalice, and accompanied by an acolyte with Missal and candle, glide mysteriously along the dimly-lighted aisles on their way from sacristy to altar.

Presently the silver tinkle of bells in all directions tells that the holy rite is again completed, and one by one the lights disappear and, save for the crimson sanctuary lamp, all is in darkness. By its soft light white-cowled priests are faintly outlined as, dotted about in the choir stalls, they are making their thanksgiving prayers in silence, till the deep booming bell announces the office of Prime, and the brethren come trooping in from all directions and take their places in the choir. The lights spring up again, and the incense-laden air vibrates with the joyous hymn of "Dawn":

Now that the daylight fills the sky,
We lift our hearts to God on high.

The music rises and falls in regular pulsations, the deep-throated organ dominating the ninety voices of the choir, as each side sings alternate verses, like the swaying from side to side of a fragrant censer.

The last strains of the *Magnificat* die away as the dawn-light struggles through the great rose window above the high altar. Amid solemn silence the Angelus now tolls out its threefold message, and the prayer is said privately by the kneeling community.

Prime is finished in the Chapter House. It is a magnificent chamber, hexagonal in form. The Abbot's throne, flanked on either side by the seats of the Prior and sub-Prior, is situated on the far side facing the entrance. A fine stained window above it bears the arms of the Order. On a raised platform completely surrounding the room, a double line of seats accommodates the community. The rear seats are reserved for the white-cowled choir monks, while the brown-habited lay brethren occupy the front and lower tier. Except for a lectern which stands in the centre the wide.

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circling sweep of beautifully-tiled floor is vacant.

When the Office is concluded, the Father Infirmarian reads out the death notices from many other monasteries of the Order situated in all parts of the world, followed by the appointed portion of St. Benedict's Rule, and then the chief business of the Chapter begins, namely, the public confession of faults. This does not mean private sins, but merely breaches of monastic rule, when penances or reprimands are meted out according to the nature of the offence.

One by one, those who have faults to confess, rise in their places and take down their hoods. On being named in turn by the Abbot, each man mentions what particular rule he has violated. Stepping down, he prostrates himself face downwards on the floor, and remains so until his Superior bids him rise to his knees to receive his penance, after which he rises to his feet, makes a profound inclination, and resumes his seat. Should a monk attempt to hide a fault, any of his brethren who may be aware of his lapse must "in brotherly love" proclaim him; that is, accuse him before the whole community. Nor is the accused permitted to defend himself, whether the charge be true or false—he must bear all things without murmuring "for Christ's sake." False charges are frequently made intentionally, in order to try the patience of a monk, and thus afford him opportunities of learning to bear false accusations patiently.

The business of the Chapter ends with a sermon, after which the brethren retire to set their cells in order, and perform any other necessary duties, until summoned to the refectory for "pittance." This is not a proper meal, as only one full meal is allowed by the Rule during the day. It consists of eight ounces of bread, and a mug of coffee or cocoa served without sugar or milk, and partaken of standing.

By the time the brethren have folded their napkins and washed their cups and wooden spoons, the bell rings for the next Office, known as Tierce, which will be followed by High Mass, the officiating priest taking his pittance afterwards. Mass is followed by another service, the office of Sext, and concludes at 8.30. a.m.

A receptacle for water is hollowed out within a niche at the entrance, into which each monk dips the tips of his fingers.

From this time until 11.30, manual labour, frequently of the most fatiguing character, is performed, in which every able-bodied member of the household must take his part.

Reclaiming a swamp, or rocky mountain slope, land and vine cultivation, wine making, blacksmithing, baking, weaving, and fashioning not only their own garments, but frequently those of the poor for miles around, are but a few of the numerous branches of industry carried on within the monastic inclosure.

The half hour from the cessation of work at 11.30 till twelve midday is devoted to rest and meditation until the refectory bell announces the one meal of the day.

A curious monastic observance takes place as the monks enter the refectory. A receptacle for water is hollowed out within a niche at the entrance, into which each monk dips the tips of his fingers, and, after drying them on a towel provided for the purpose, passes it to the brother behind him. While performing this ceremony he prays for a

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Vegetable soups, bread, fruit, and cheese form the simple meal, and it is taken in silence, except for the voice of the reader, who occupies a pulpit standing half-way down the room.

clean heart and mind, to partake of his food to God's glory, and not for pampering his carnal appetite.

How he could over-indulge, however he might desire to do so, would puzzle the reader could he look into the refectory with its bare, sand-scrubbed table flanking the rough walls. It is a long, low room. At the far end, on a raised platform, are the seats of the Abbot, Prior and sub-Prior. A large crucifix hangs on the wall behind the Abbot's seat.

The community, before taking their places at the tables, form a double line down the centre of the floor, and face the crucifix. Grace is then sung, and each man, seating himself, duly unfolds and spreads his napkin. The fare is of the plainest. Neither meat, fish, nor eggs are ever partaken of at those bare tables. Vegetable soups, bread, fruit, and cheese form the simple meal, and it is taken in silence, except for the voice of the reader, who occupies a pulpit standing half-way down the room, and reads a portion of Scripture, followed by selections from the Fathers.

When the last has finished "washing up," the Abbot gives the signal and the brethren again face the crucifix. After the first part of the grace is recited, they file off to finish it in the church, chanting the *Miserere* as they pass through the cloisters.

Before leaving the church the community will recite the Office of Nones, and then aprons and thick boots will be donned by those working in the fields or garden and manual labour resumed until 4.30. This also is the time for study and lectures for those preparing to receive Holy Orders. In the Novice House the master, always selected for his wisdom and piety, is instructing his pupils in the many duties involved in the life to which they are preparing to dedicate themselves. The novitiate covers a period of two years, during which time the novice is free to leave the cloister whenever he chooses, but when once the solemn profession is made, he cannot be freed from his vows except by personal dispensation from the Pope.

The "cease work" sounds at 4.30, and another half hour's interval for meditation precedes the bell for Vespers. Doffing their working garb the monks assemble in Chapter House or Scriptorium to await the call to Vespers, the longest service of the day, lasting from 5 till 6.15 p.m.

The greater part of this office is sung, and

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is a most impressive service. From long practice, the voices blend beautifully together in the solemn Gregorian music. It is concluded by several commemorations, according to the season, and the *Magnificat*.

At 6.15 the evening pittance is served in the refectory and is exactly similar to that of the morning with one exception; the monks sit to eat it instead of standing as in the morning. It is soon disposed of, and then such necessary work as feeding and folding cattle, milking, etc., is performed until at seven o'clock everyone not actually in the infirmary must attend the reading in the Chapter House.

This quiet half hour is the sweetest and most peaceful time of the day for the monk. Tired out by his eighteen hours of continued labour, he lets the soothing influence of the reading steal into his senses. It is probably the life of some member of his own Order which forms the subject of the reading, who, centuries before, lived the same life, and, perhaps, in the very house he is in, performed the very duties which have this day wearied out his own limbs, and he experiences the sweetest comfort from its contemplation. The welcome bell rings out the Compline hour. It is the last Office of the day, and he takes his place in the procession to the church. The spell of the reading is still upon him as he steps forward in his stall to open the Office, and there is a tremor of a joy (known only to those who dwell in the cloister) in his voice as the opening petition rings out: *Deus in adjutorium meum intende* (O God incline to my prayer) and the sweetly solemn service proceeds in the dim sanctuary light. The outer public church is in darkness, but the occasional clicking of rosary beads tells that it is not deserted.

The "Salve Regina" is ended, and the Angelus is recited in breathless silence. The monks now pass out in single file to their rest, only pausing a moment to receive the Abbot's blessing at the church door.

Entering his cell our monk lays his weary body upon his plank bed, and the silent Presence on the Cross continues Its untiring vigil until, at 2 a.m., the Matin bell shall again summon the sleeper to the work of another day in the life of the Cloister.

# A Romance of Highgate Hill.

**On the Hill of happy Highgate,**
**In the days of long ago,**
**When the sinking sun with crimson**
**Set the western clouds aglow;**
**When the cable-cars grew weary**
**And the world around was still,**
**Then I met Matilda Hopkins**
**On the slopes of Highgate Hill.**

**I remember how I kissed her**
**On a balmy night in June;**
**But those happy times are over,**
**Though they ended all too soon.**
**Now Matilda treats me coldly,**
**And her faithful swain discards**
**For a six-foot swaggering sergeant**
**In the Twenty-first Life Guards.**

**Fare thee well, thou Archway Tavern,**
**Creaking cable-cars, adieu!**
**My Matilda, thou art faithless,**
**Though I thought thou wouldst be true.**
**Never more thou'lt lean to greet me**
**O'er the kitchen window-sill,**
**On the Hill of happy Highgate,**
**On the slopes of Highgate Hill.**

**F. E. Baily.**

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*The Story of a Gallant Deed in the Hunting Field.*

BERTIE NORTH'S fork was suddenly arrested in mid-air, and his mouth, half-open to receive the sustaining morsel, was extended still more.

"What's the matter? What are you staring at?" said his host impatiently.

"John, you have deceived me! You ask an unsuspecting friend here to an ostensibly male *ménage à deux*, and then—you spring *that* on one."

North's despair was comic as he pointed to the window.

"Where? What? Oh, the dickens!" Sir John Manners' strongly-marked brows drew together irascibly as he peered through the window, and saw that which had upset North's equanimity.

"Good Heavens! two carriages, and piles—*piles* of feminine luggage!" ejaculated North, while his friend seemed tongue-tied. Sir John could scarcely believe the evidence of his eyes. Two carriages were lumbering up the steep hill-side, and every moment brought them into nearer view.

"The road ends here, doesn't it? So where else could they be going?"

"Perhaps they have mistaken the road, whoever they may be," said Sir John lamely.

"*Who*ever they may be," repeated North scornfully. "Have I not sisters? Don't I know the shape of those trunks and hat-boxes? I'll bet you anything in reason that your visitors are ladies!"

"Oh!" said Manners, weakly collapsing into a chair.

Lucas came in at that moment with the letters.

"Perhaps I shall get the key to the puzzle among these." Manners opened some letters quickly.

"Ah! here we are. Oh, blow that ass Robinson. A pretty mess he's made of things. Listen!

"DEAR SIR JOHN,

You will remember that when you succeeded to your late uncle's property, I informed you that negotiations were already in progress with an American gentleman, Mr. Lorraine, regarding the letting of Cluny Lodge. Acting upon your instructions that these negotiations should be cancelled, on account of your decision to occupy the Lodge pending the alterations at the Hall, I immediately wrote to cry off. Up to the present date, however, I have received no reply, but I conclude that Mr. Lorraine understands the situation, although he has failed to acknowledge my letter.

I remain, etc.,
DONALD ROBINSON."

"The American evidently considers the 'let' an accomplished fact," broke in North. "This"—he pointed to the first approaching carriage—"is doubtless the advance guard of his feminine belongings. Depend on it, John, you are in for a regular American invasion."

There were two carriages. Each had its full complement of luggage, but there were only two passengers. A tall, slim girl, with

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the most wonderful eyes, jumped from the first vehicle, and gave her orders to the two drivers quickly. Then she sprang up the steps and rang the bell. A neat little woman, attired in black, followed more leisurely.

"Mistress and maid," ejaculated Sir John. The dining-room door was ajar, and the two men could plainly hear Lucas being interviewed by the lady.

"I am the new tenant. I have taken the place for three months, with the option of renewing the agreement if I like it, and the hunting is good."

The butler's voice could be heard, explaining; then the lady's, protesting hotly.

"But I understood from the agent that everything was settled, and that we could have immediate possession."

"Perhaps you would like to see Sir John, miss."

"I most certainly should!"

A rustle of feminine silks followed, and a glimpse of a head held high, and perhaps a trifle defiantly, was obtained as Lucas ushered her into a room on the opposite side of the hall.

How it happened no one quite knew. Manners himself was most uncertain, but from the moment he entered the morning-room those grey eyes, half angry and half pleading, held his own most unaccountably. Matters adjusted themselves quite easily in an incredibly short space of time. Of course, it was a burning shame that a young lady who had travelled post-haste from the neighbourhood of the Italian lakes to take up the tenancy of Cluny Lodge should have to go away disappointed, and with no chance of participating in the hunting for which the district was famous.

"But you! How horrid of me to forget. Of course, the butler said you were in residence. I could not think of asserting my claim to the tenancy now."

But the lady's remonstrances were cut short by the owner explaining that he and his friend would be equally comfortable at the Cottage, half-a-mile away.

Bertie North made some very wry faces over the situation, and fired off a volley of witticisms at his friend's expense. But it was extraordinary how he veered round to Sir John's point of view when the lady joined them at lunch. The grey eyes were magnetic enough, and North's heart, always noted for its impressionability, surrendered itself promptly to the charm of the new tenant of Cluny Lodge.

Arrived at the Cottage at the end of the day, he was still enthusiastic. As he was trying to adjust his inordinately long limbs to the proportions of the old-fashioned four-poster bedstead, Manners came in to see how he was getting on.

"Oh, splendidly, thanks. It's quite comfortable. And to think that if I had not urged you to come to the Cottage, and to give in to the very just claims of that poor, unprotected young thing, she might now be a homeless wanderer on the face of this inhospitable—er clime!" he crooned out in a sentimental manner.

"Oh, shut up, you humbug! You know you did not like the idea of moving off from here."

"That was before I had seen my divinity. Afterwards my subjection was complete."

"One must draw the line somewhere, and I draw one at that point where a man forgets the respect due to a married woman. I generally speak very distinctly, and I don't think I muddled the introduction. But now I understand why you persistently addressed the lady as *Miss* Lorraine, instead of *Mrs.* Lorraine."

North's face was a study.

"By George! and I actually told her that the Cottage would be perfectly comfortable." He gave the foot of the bedstead a vicious kick. "Why, oh why, did our ancestors have such confoundedly short beds? Ugh!"

II.

She rode well. Even the disappointed Bertie could but own that.

It was the first meet of the season, and although there was a goodly number of workmanlike-looking horsewomen present, Mrs. Lorraine, mounted on her pet hunter, Try-again, attracted a great deal of attention.

"There's no one here to hold a candle to her," said Bertie; "but what Mr. Lorraine can be thinking of to let such a pretty creature hunt with only a groom to look after her, I can't imagine. Perhaps I had better——"

"No," interrupted Sir John, "don't intrude. I mean to keep an eye on her."

"Oh, all right. If you wish to play the heavy father, pray do."

Further conversation was out of the question, for hounds had found.

Sir John Manners, with a strict sense of duty which Bertie North marvelled at, kept a tight rein on his eager hunter, and a guardian eye on the slight, yielding figure of Mrs. Lorraine. Once, when the going was easy, she sent a swift glance

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behind, and smiled brilliantly to find her landlord so near.

"Isn't it glorious?" she cried.

What a child she seemed! A sudden impatience with the absent husband caught and held the baronet. It seemed such a waste of charming comradeship on Mr. Lorraine's part. Sir John was still occupied with this thought when his horse landed him well into a turnip field, in the middle of which were the hounds, huddling round their victim.

"Don't you just love hunting?" asked Mrs. Lorraine, as she reined in her horse.

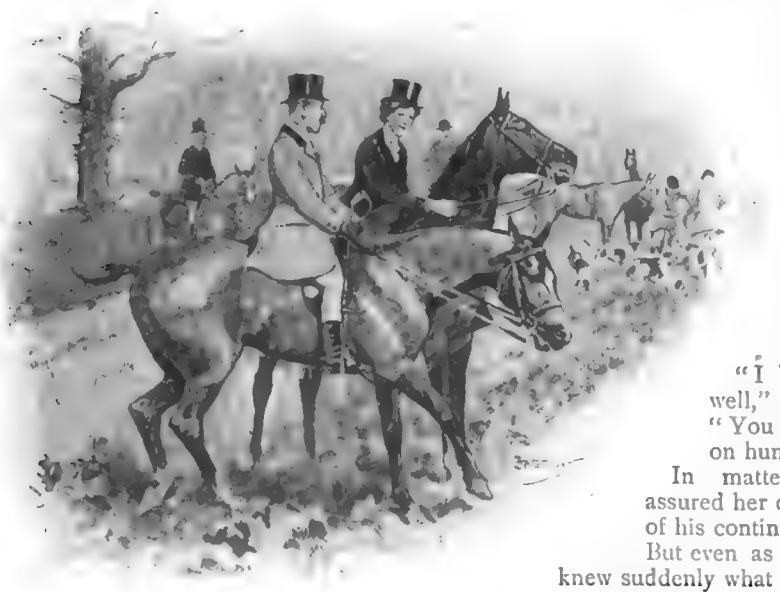
The keen blue eyes met the questioning gaze of the radiant grey ones.

"Yes," said Sir John slowly, "I—I have always loved hunting."

Quite an ordinary assertion to be made at the finish of a ripping run in such a country as Blankshire, yet the grey eyes dropped suddenly under the steady look of the man who was making this rather tame remark. The lady patted her horse's neck a minute. Then she said shyly:

"I am going to ask a favour. Seems to me I'm always trying to get in your debt. I'm American, and so I'm not above asking for what I want. It's a trait of our nation, you know. The favour is, will you give me a lead now and again? The country is new to me, and I promised my——"

She came to an abrupt halt.



"Don't you just love hunting?" asked Mrs. Lorraine.

"You mean that you promised your husband that you would be careful," said Manners gravely.

Mrs. Lorraine's colour, already heightened by the quick going, now became positively brilliant.

"Yes, I promised Mr. Lorraine that I would try to make friends with someone who knew the country."

After this what could be done? Bertie chaffed his friend a little regarding the situation; but Sir John kept his promise loyally, and was always ready to pilot his charming tenant across country. As North put it, Sir John was happy in looking after Mrs. Lorraine, and he, North, was quite happy in looking after his friend.

But a day came when North had to say good-bye to Blankshire and return home.

"Friend John," he said, as he made his farewells, "I don't like leaving you without my parental eye. It's time that careless husband of Mrs. Lorraine's turned up to be her cavalier in the field. It would leave you free to come with me. Will you come?"

"Not just at present, thank you. I understand what you are driving at, but I can assure you that you are quite mistaken."

But the little pin-thrust left its mark, and the entire satisfaction which Manners had hitherto felt in the continued absence of Mr. Lorraine abated.

And Bertie North was not there to see the strained and anxious look that gradually crept into his friend's face, or to note how a certain austerity of manner grew yet more pronounced. Even Mrs. Lorraine noticed it.

They were riding home together one afternoon, after a day's hunting, which had finished some distance from home.

"I believe you are not well," she said suddenly. "You don't seem so keen on hunting now."

In matter-of-fact tones he assured her of his well-being, and of his continued interest in sport. But even as he was speaking he knew suddenly what was wrong with him. He had fallen in love with a woman to whose attractive personality all his most

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Taking a flying leap over the small quickset hedge . . . she was racing like the wind across the adjoining field.

honoured beliefs should have held him impervious. But he would not insult her by remaining in her presence; he would stamp out this perverse passion by sheer force of will. He must shun her sweet presence as the plague; he must——

His somewhat chaotic thoughts were suddenly brought to an abrupt conclusion by the need of prompt action. Both horses were being ridden a little carelessly, perhaps, at that moment, when a motor-car unexpectedly appeared round a bend of the road, and by its violent hooting startled Try-again into a very frenzy of fear. With a quick movement she turned, and, taking a flying leap over the small quickset hedge which ran alongside the road, she was racing like the wind across the adjoining field.

"Bolted!" ejaculated Manners, as he put his horse at the hedge and galloped after. The car had come to a standstill, and one of the men in it was standing up and shouting something. Sir John never heeded, but, setting his teeth hard, sent his horse forward for every ounce he was worth.

He knew, with a sickening grip at his heart, that unless he could get his tired horse even with the runaway within the next few minutes, a horrible tragedy would finish their day's sport. Try-again's thundering hoofs were taking her mistress and herself to certain death. Unless a miracle intervened, Daphne Lorraine would be dashed to pieces before Sir John's eyes. A flint quarry of unusual depth lay right across the runaway's line of flight. Only a tiny hedge of withered privet crowned the verge and formed a most inadequate barrier.

Manners ground his heels savagely into his horse's side and sent him along yet more recklessly. And all the time he shouted maddened directions to the girl in front.

"'Ware dell! Pull her round to the right. Throw yourself off!" But in that frantic race of hoofs nothing intelligible could be heard. Stricken, for the first time in her life, with something like despair, Daphne Lorraine yet sat steadily in her saddle. All she could do by voice and bridle was done, but Try-again's fear had completely over-mastered

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her senses, and she was impervious to her mistress' cries.

It was only the most consummate horsemanship, combined with a perfect balance, that had prevented her being thrown in that first sudden spring from the road into the field. She wished now that her seat had been a little less steady, for a fall on the grass that bordered the roadside might not have been fraught with much danger, but here the ground was hard and flinty, small boulders lay scattered about, and she dared not throw herself off now. Besides, she would not give up all hope.

Try-again might be pulled up in time, there was yet a chance that she might swerve aside before they rushed upon that ominous-looking drop yonder at the quarry's edge.

Again and again she sawed at Try-again's mouth. Then she tried "give-and-take" jerks, but the mare had the bit between her teeth, and after a few more frantic efforts the girl wearily gave up the contest and sat despairingly in her saddle waiting for the end.

To her the minutes seemed hours.

To the grim-faced man behind, they were but miserable, all-too-fleeting seconds which brought him scarce half-a-length nearer to the pair in front. The quarry lay well in sight now. Daphne gave a queer little moan, then dropped the reins and covered her eyes with her hands.

"At it, my brave boy! Oh, let's pull this off together!" The words came in spasmodic gasps as Sir John leant forward on his horse's neck. As if in answer to his master's appeal, the hunter made a marvellous spurt. His stride lengthened, and faster and faster rattled his hoofs over the stony ground.

They were racing perceptibly nearer.

Would they be in time?

That horrible gap in the landscape was terribly near now; it seemed an utter impossibility for the plucky chestnut to overtake the runaway, when there was a stumble from the latter. Try-again narrowly escaped putting her foot right into a rabbit hole. Daphne clutched at her horse's mane as she was nearly pitched off. But there was a slight diminution in speed after this, scarcely perceptible to the frightened girl, but it sufficed for the chestnut behind to creep up yet another length nearer. Another few seconds and he was right alongside, and then Sir John turned his head suddenly, and cannoning sideways against Try-again's steaming flanks, by sheer force of weight bore the mare back from the edge of the quarry. Then he caught at the dangling bridle.

By a hair's breadth only was a tragedy averted. Even now they were galloping perilously near the edge, and it was a giant's work to keep his own horse's head straight and at the same time saw and jerk Try-again's mouth into obedience. As Sir John gave another strong pull, the runaway was thrown back on her haunches and her course was suddenly arrested. Daphne kept in her saddle, but Sir John's horse reared and threw his master heavily. Try-again's bridle was still in his hand, the impetus of his fall dragged her forward again, and her fore hoofs came down with a sickening thud on his chest.

Although she had scarcely made any outcry over her own peril Mrs. Lorraine now shrieked piteously.

"I've killed him!" she cried, as she slipped to the ground. "No, it was you. Oh, you beast!"

In ungovernable fury she backed the mare away from the fallen man. Try-again, thoroughly cowed and shaking like a leaf, whinnied piteously to her mistress. Daphne gave her a fierce cut with her whip.

"I'll never ride you again, you brute!" she said unreasonably.

Then, coming to her senses a little, she knelt down by the hurt man. She tried to find some sign of life, but could only murmur with white lips: "He's dead, dead! just as I was beginning to love him."

She sobbed hysterically as she chafed his hands.

Suddenly Daphne felt herself pulled aside unceremoniously.

"Let *me* see what the dickens is the mischief."

"Waal, young man, two ribs stove in and a broken collar-bone, and a very much bruised pleura are not a bad lot for skill and patience to wait upon. But you are not going to die."

"Oh——!" a little feminine sigh of relief came from somewhere, but Sir John could not see quite clearly yet.

"Have another pull at this. Better? Complexion not quite so green as when I found Daphne here crying over what she thought was a funeral."

A tall, elderly, keen-faced man looked searchingly into the baronet's eyes. "If I hadn't been personally interested in the affair I should have enjoyed what really proved to be a very bad quarter-of-an-hour for me. I never saw finer horsemanship nor finer dash, sir. And you'll feel for me when I tell you that it was my car that was the

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cause of it. But I'm forgetting. I'm your doctor now, and we'll have to get you carried to the car somehow."

"I don't quite understand," said Sir John feebly, "who——"

"Bob Lorraine, at your service. Before I made my pile I was a doctor, so don't fret but what I can fix up these broken ribs. Daphne, come here."

"Yes, father."

"But Mrs. Lorraine is——" It hurt Manners unspeakably to talk, but he was determined to understand.

"Oh," the tall man chuckled, "so you are still on that tack, miss. She thought the proper English Mrs. Grundy would round on a young woman who hunted unattended unless she had the prefix Mrs. to her name. Waal, sir, this is my daughter, *Miss* Lorraine."

"I should like," said Sir John gaspingly, "I should like——" His eyes dwelt on Daphne's with a peculiar expression. The girl's face turned from white to rosy red during the scrutiny. Then Sir John shut his eyes.

"Fainted again. Just as well. Pick up the hurdle, men," said Mr. Lorraine.

* * * * *

A month later, at Cluny Lodge, a much-bandaged man was wheeled into the morning room where the winter sun peeped in brightly.

A slim figure at the window rose hurriedly.

"I can manage the wheeling myself now," said Sir John to the butler.

After a little desultory conversation in which condolences and sympathy and congratulations became a little mixed, Manners said slowly: "So you were not married after all."

Two red flags flashed out simultaneously on Miss Lorraine's cheeks.

"At the time of the accident," pursued Manners, "you said something I could not reconcile with my idea of you as a married woman. I could not have been quite unconscious, for I heard you say something about —'beginning to love me.'"

"Oh!" Daphne's colour spread to her neck, and she turned as if to go.

"Please don't run away from me; it would be a mean advantage to take, seeing that I cannot follow you. But did I hear aright? Was it the truth?"

"You must have been dreaming—delirious."

"Come here." Sir John's manner was always courteous, but it was very decided at times.

Daphne came nearer. She rested her hand on the side of the invalid chair, but her eyes refused to meet his.

"Perhaps I was dreaming," said the man; "at any rate the present is a grim reality, and I could never ask any woman to marry such a shattered wretch——"

"Oh, don't," said Daphne. "I'll marry you if you really want me to, even if I have to push you about in a bath-chair for ever after."

"Then the love that was *beginning*——"

"Oh, you need not fear," she said quaintly. "Seems to me it was always there, ever since I walked right in here and took possession of your hunting-box."

"And of me," said Manners happily.

## MY LADY'S KISS.

**I wondered if my Lady fair**
**Would take it very much amiss**
**If I should steal from lips so rare**
**One kiss!**

**Stealing was sin I had been taught,**
**The base temptation I would shun;**
**So, humbly kneeling, I besought**
**"Just one!"**

**She stooped—I hardly dare the rest**
**To tell, or write with modest pen—**
**Her dainty curls my cheek caressed,**
**And then**

**She whispered, "MORE than ONE."**
**You must**
**Not think her bold, because, you see,**
**My Lady-love is only just**
**Turned three!**

**Mary Farrah.**

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# PICTURE PARAGRAPHS.

*Liberal Payment is Made for All Pictures Accepted for Use in this Feature. Readers are Invited to Submit Photographs of Curiosities, Accompanied by a Short Description.*

A wonderful example of coal-sculpture. The whole of this clock-mounting, including the case into which the clock is slipped, is carved from a single piece of coal.

### CLEVER COAL-CARVING.

A CERTAIN gentleman, Mr. W. Leaver, is an adept at the difficult art of coal-sculpture.

He does not undertake to carve a piece of best Wallsend, however, but uses a particular variety known as "canal coal," and even this must be examined carefully, to insure its having no flaws.

The particular example of his skill illustrated is chiefly remarkable because of the circular mount into which the clock is fitted.

This mount is extremely thin, and was, naturally, very difficult to hollow out, having regard to the brittle nature of the material of which it is composed.

For carving in coal, the instruments used are chiefly an assortment of chisels, and a rasp.

### A MAN WHO IS RUN OVER NIGHTLY.

FEW of us would care to have a heavy touring-car, full of passengers, driven over our bodies nightly, even if the bodies in question were defended with armour.

But at a Paris music-hall recently, a man suffered himself to be thus treated, with this exception: he wore no armour.

The turn was rather a gruesome one.

When the wheels of the motor, pitiless as those of the car of Juggernaut, rolled over the prostrate victim's vertebræ, many of the ladies present screamed or fainted, and most of the audience felt an uncomfortable feeling somewhat akin to sea-sickness.

To reassure them, the man who had been run over used, when the car had gone its merciless course, to get up and bow with a pleased expression, as if charmed by the demonstration of so much sympathy.

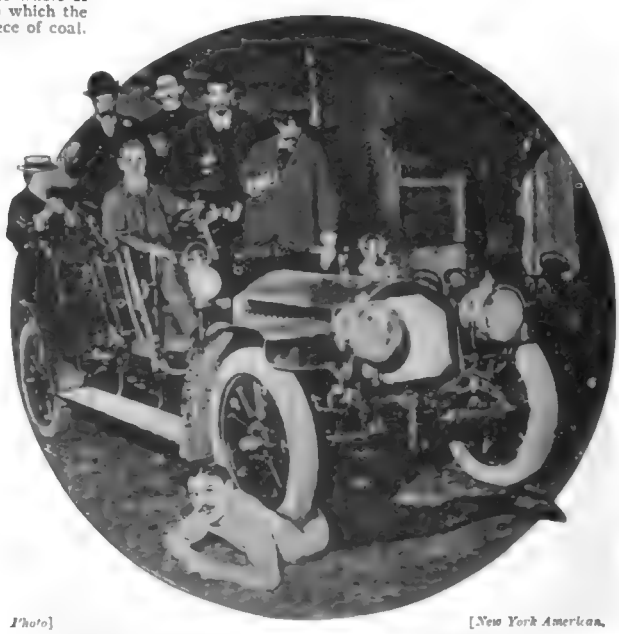

*Photo* [*New York American.*

At a Paris music-hall, a little while ago, a heavy motor-car full of passengers was nightly driven over this man, as in the picture.

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## MODERN GLADIATORS.

### A Revival of the Arena in Paris.

The people of Paris, like the Athenians of old, are alway eager for some new thing.

Recently, in order to satisfy this weakness, two gentlemen, M. le Professeur Dubois, and M. del Piat, decided to revive, in a mild form, the ancient Roman gladiatorial struggles. Accordingly they set to work to practise, one the art of the *retiarius*, or net-thrower, and the other that of a swordsman.

The net-thrower, in addition to his net, is armed with a trident, which is very useful in stopping a rush on the part of the swordsman.

The latter is provided with a helmet, shield, and, of course, with the short Roman stabbing sword. The great object of the net-thrower's existence is to entangle his assailant in his net to such an extent that the unlucky wight may be conveniently slaughtered with the trident. Naturally, M. le Professeur Dubois and M. del Piat do not carry realism to the extent of killing one another, but in all other respects this revival of the old Roman "games" is correct in every detail. With stealthy step the swordsman advances, shield thrust forward, against the *retiarius*, who, if he cannot make a cast, skips nimbly to one side. At last the net entangles the helpless victim, and he is at the mercy of the trident.

The swordsman is half-entrapped by the net, but, by grasping his adversary's arm at the elbow joint, he paralyses it, and is able to escape.

The *retiarius*, or net-thrower, is armed with a trident, and, while seeking to entangle his adversary in the net, is able to stop a rush by means of this weapon.

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*Photo* *J. R. Richardson.*

It is seldom that a kitten is seen with such a merry smile as the one which the small cat in the boot is wearing.

## A SMILING KITTEN.

Most of us have read about the famous grin on the Cheshire Cat in "Alice in Wonderland," but cats seldom display a broad smile in real life.

The above kitten, however, seems to be the exception that proves the rule. The expression on its face would indicate a very bright and happy disposition.

A great amount of patience was necessary to obtain a photograph of the kitten while smiling.

No fewer than six plates were expended before success was achieved, and even then it was only by placing the small feline in an old boot that it could be induced to assume what the photographic profession terms "a pleasant expression."

Why being placed in a boot should cause the kitten amusement, it is difficult to say.

The fact, however, remains.

## THE SPARROWS' FRIEND.

One of the most amusing sights in Paris is to watch how tame the birds have become in the Tuileries Gardens.

Sparrows and pigeons abound, and are, like all their kind, very familiar, but a certain French gentleman, M. Pol, has so far acquired their confidence that they flock round him in hundreds. He feeds them daily, and has so won their affections that they seem to know their names, come at his call, and obey his instructions.

One bird has learnt that it must find its portion between his feet, and, although he pretends to be on the point of giving a furious kick, the bird is not to be frightened, and picks up his crumbs with all a sparrow's calm effrontery.

Another bird, when M. Pol pretends to dance, dances too. Twice a day the feast of the sparrows and pigeons takes place, and there is always a crowd to watch the amusing performance between M. Pol and his pets.

They are very loth to let him leave the gardens and follow him quite to the entrance of the Rue de Rivoli.

*Photo* *Jacques Boyer.*

A French gentleman has made such friends with the birds in the Tuileries Gardens, Paris, that they flock round him whenever he appears.

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*Photo* *Clarke & Hyde.*

This model of a diver, made entirely of sponge except the metal fittings, and five feet in height, was recently on view in a London shop.

## A FIGURE MADE OF SPONGE.

MANY quaint figures have been made by eccentric people from what seem unpromising materials, but two of the most perfect of extraordinary models were recently on view in the window of a large retail establishment in London.

They were two figures about five feet high, and were made almost entirely from sponge. One depicted the typical John Bull, and the other a diver complete with helmet and fittings.

The models were most beautifully executed, and correct in every detail. During the time that they were on show, crowds of people collected round the window to inspect them, and they were a source of attraction for a lengthy period.

They cost about £10 each to manufacture.

THE ROYAL MAGAZINE.

## A TROUT'S TOMBSTONE.

FEW of the many trout which depart this life have monuments erected to their memory with impassioned poetry graven thereon.

However, in Blockley, a village in South Worcestershire, they cherish the memory of faithful animals better than in most parts of the country—or, at any rate, they did in 1855, when the stone in question was set up.

It stands in the garden of Fish Cottage, and records the great and manifold virtues of a certain trout, which was very tame, and, as the poet testifies, would eat out of people's hands.

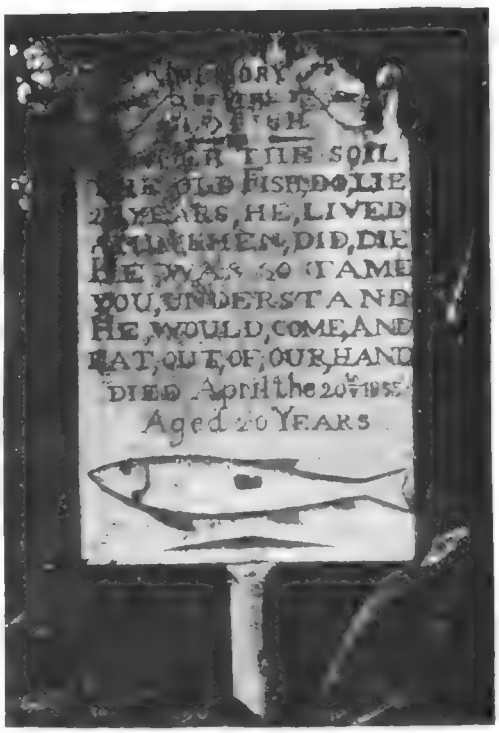
The author of the inspired lines which we quote below evidently wrote them under the influence of deep emotion. The state of his feelings is most apparent in his punctuation.

Here is the inscription on the stone:

**In Memory of the Old Fish.**

**Under the soil the old Fish. do. lie**
**Twenty years. he. lived and then. did. die.**
**He Was so tame you. understand**
**He Would. come. and eat. out. of. our. hand.**

**Died April the 20th. 1855**
**Aged 20 years.**




This handsome tablet was erected to a tame fish, which expired on April 20th, 1855, aged 20 years.



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# A Soldier of the King.

*How a Soldier's Little Son Wanted to Help His Father Fight.*

By Bertram Stower.

When one is a veteran of eight summers and more than four feet in height, it is really high time to consider what one's future is to be. Such were the thoughts of Leslie Travers, and they were contained beneath a head of light curls, that three rebellions, to say nothing of an early-discovered attempt at self-barbering, had failed to persuade his mother to remove.

Considering the matter in a white-duck sailor suit, and from the spacious bounds of an easy-chair, the owner of the said curls and briefly-stated thoughts broke into voice:

"Mamma, Frank Henderson says he is going to be a cowboy when he grows into a man."

A pretty, girlish face looked up from a large blotting-pad and smiled at the child.

"Mother would not like you to be a cowboy," she said "And I am sure daddy would not. Why, I believe if I told him in my letter what you say, he would send one of his soldiers straight back from South Africa to stop you. And"—she sighed—"daddy lost such a lot of his men in the last fight. He really can't spare one."

"Then I shan't be a cowboy, mamma," said the boy decisively, "I'll be—I'll be—Oh, tell daddy I'll say next time you send a letter to him."

The girlish face bent over the blotting-pad and her pen moved quickly. Presently, with a smile, she folded her letter and placed it in an envelope.

"Now we will go and post daddy's letter," she cried gaily, damping the gum with the tip of her finger.

Each Friday afternoon she and the boy in the sailor suit walked to the village post-office, and thereto intrusted a precious missive that would raise a smile of pleasure on a soldier's face far away on the scorching veld of South Africa.

"Good-afternoon, ma'am," said the village postmaster, who also dealt in groceries and other miscellanies. "No, it's just under the half-ounce. One penny, please. . . . Very bad news from the Front to-day, ma'am," went on the old man, reaching a box of chocolates from a shelf. "Ah, these are what little boys like. Won't you have one, my dear? . . . Very bad news from the Front. But the Colonel's regiment fought right well. Gallant fellows, them Buffs. But to think that half of 'em should fall. 'Twill

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be a real sad blow to the Colonel—but, thank God, he's spared to you yet."

During this talk the boy in the sailor suit had stood staring up at a framed, coloured picture, portraying types of His Majesty's Army in the brilliant splendour of full marching order.

"Mamma wouldn't like me to be a soldier," he murmured. Yet all the while his thoughts were working, wondering to which regiment he would like best to belong.

"Ay, he'll be a soldier like his father," remarked the postmaster, noticing the look of interest on the boy's face.

Then it was that Leslie first beheld the vision. He stood at the door, grand, supreme, a stalwart veteran, his breast brilliant with six glorious medals, and a little cap from which fluttered a bunch of red, white, and blue ribbons crowned his grey hair.

"Whatever sort of a soldier is he?" said Leslie, regarding the vision with unfeigned astonishment, and trying to think which of the pictures the tall veteran was most like.

"It's my brother," explained the postmaster. "He's stayin' a bit with me. And he's a recruitin' sergeant. And a recruitin' sergeant is a soldier what——"

"Oh, I know, thank you, Mr. Ben," the boy interposed. "A recruitin' sergeant is a soldier what tries to get people to become soldiers."

"Right, sir," said a voice that seemed to come from the ceiling, and Leslie jumped as the vision advanced towards him.

"Have you got a lot more soldiers for my daddy?" he asked, when he had recovered from his surprise. "Mamma said he lost such a lot in the last fightings."

"Suitable men is very hard to get," said the Recruiting Sergeant solemnly. "We can't get 'em the right size."

"Have they, then, to be as big as you, Mr. Sergeant?" asked the boy in the sailor suit, regarding the immensity of the veteran with profound admiration.

"Big as me,"—the Recruiting Sergeant whistled—"I'm about ten sizes too big for this job. Lor', no—what Lord Roberts wants is men about your size—men what the enemy can't see. They are the ones." And he winked across the counter at his brother.

Leslie would have liked to pursue the conversation further. But his mother was waiting, so, with a polite good-bye, which the Recruiting Sergeant acknowledged with a real military salute, he took her hand, and they left the shop.

"Mamma," he began, as they sat at tea, "the Recruiting Sergeant is a most interestin' person. And he does want soldiers very bad," the boy pursued, regarding with affection a large plum cake. "May I?—Thank you, mamma." He helped himself to a slice. "He says he does not want big ones like he is. They are too big for the job." A silence followed. Then, "I wonder if granny would take care of you?" he added thoughtfully. "Then I could go to the war and help daddy."

"Little boys must go to school and learn a lot of things before they go to fight," said his mother smiling.

"Daddy knows a big lot," agreed Leslie reflectively, and forgot to ask for another slice of cake.

The vision stood at the door when next Leslie appeared at the post-office holding a letter in one hand and a penny in the other.

"Good-morning, Master Travers," he said with a friendly smile.

"Good-morning, Mr. Sergeant," said the boy, then stopped and rapturously admired the stately veteran. "Have you got any recruitings for daddy?" he ventured at the conclusion of the survey.

The Recruiting Sergeant shook his head.

"Can't come across the right sort," he answered gloomily. "They're all too big and fat. Now"—he lowered his voice—"if I could only get hold of some LITTLE 'uns to send out, what could hide behind a blade of grass, wouldn't the Colonel be glad—wouldn't he just!"

"And daddy's lost such a lot of men," murmured the Colonel's son pensively.

"That's just it," agreed the Recruiting Sergeant.

"Have you to be very clever to be a soldier?" Leslie inquired, laying the letter and the penny on the counter.

"Depends," said the vision doubtfully. "Depends."

Leslie's heart fluttered wildly with excitement.

"Do you think daddy would be glad to have *me* out with him?" he asked eagerly.

"I should just say he WOULD," the vision replied emphatically.

"Then, Mr. Sergeant—then 'list me, if you please. And daddy shall have one man more to fight for him."

"But supposin' he lost you?" said the Recruiting Sergeant solemnly.

The boy placed his hands in his trousers pockets and thought deeply.

"'Course, I should not like to be lost," he

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said slowly. Then, lowering his voice and with a touch of pride, he confided: "But I was once lost at the sea-side, Mr. Sergeant, so 'course I should not mind very much."

"And what would your mamma say if I went and 'listed you?" argued the vision.

"Dad said to mamma when she cried when he was going off to the war: 'Little woman, I have my duty to my country to perform.' An' mamma stopped crying almost at once, an' she did not let daddy see her cry again."

"Quite so—duty to your country, 'course," said the vision, Leslie thought, somewhat gruffly. "So I'm to understand that you wish to join His Majesty's Army?"

"Yes, please. I do really want to help daddy."

"That's business," remarked the Recruiting Sergeant briskly. And turning to his brother: "Fred, will you kindly fill up the necessary documents an' 'list this young gentleman?"

The postmaster placed a penny stamp on the top of a telegraph-form and scribbled steadily for a minute. Then he placed the form in a long envelope, closed it with a big and important seal of red wax, and finally inscribed the words in very plain writing, "Private Travers."

"There," he said, placing the envelope in the boy's hand, "now you are a soldier of the King."

"What! so soon?" gasped Leslie.

The Recruiting Sergeant laughed.

"Must do things quickly when we want men so bad, Private Travers," he said.

Leslie looked at the big envelope with some dismay. There was some printing on the top, and he spelt out slowly: "O-N H-I-S M-A-J-E-S-T-Y'S S-E-R-V-I-C-E."

"That means," explained the Recruiting Sergeant, "that you are now in—HIS MAJESTY'S SERVICE." Then he drew himself up stiffly in military fashion. "'Tenshun, Private Travers," he roared, as if on parade, and the Colonel's son sprang into the position with surprising smartness.

"Ay, you're a clever one," observed the postmaster.

"Daddy taught me," explained the boy modestly.

"Stand—at—ease!"

The Sergeant's voice was most tremendous: but the boy obeyed in the most correct military fashion, and stood gallantly still under the old warrior's inspection.

"'Tenshun!" again commanded the Recruiting Sergeant. "Private Travers, your present orders are these: First, you return to your mamma, and stay with her until His Majesty gets a ship ready to take you out to the war. Secondly—secondly——" The vision pulled his long moustache, said "secondly" again, and looked helplessly at his brother.

"Secondly," began the postmaster, leaning over the counter and beaming on the young recruit, "you must take great care of what's inside that envelope. And——"

"'Course, 'course," interrupted the Recruiting Sergeant impatiently. "That's what any soldier is bound to do. It ain't worth mentioning."

"Thirdly," pursued the postmaster.

"Dees-miss!" roared the Sergeant, indignant that his brother should presume so far in military matters.

And a small, white sailor-suited figure fled down the village street, and never paused a moment until he jumped into his mother's arms.

There exists something surprisingly difficult in letting one's mother know precisely what one has become without breaking the news too suddenly. This Leslie discovered very quickly. At dinner his mind was in too much of a whirl for him even to think of speaking on the subject, and even though he tried very hard during tea, strangely the words would not come. Somehow, he felt that the news might make her cry, and then he would be sure to cry himself, which would be a most improper thing for a soldier of the King to do.

At breakfast the next morning he tried in vain to talk about soldiers. And afterwards in desperation he left the long envelope lying right before his mother's eyes. But she merely took it up and said: "This must be yours, Leslie. Don't leave your things lying about, dear." And so a great scheme failed.

Three days passed, yet so far Leslie had not spoken a word.

Then one morning something happened which completely altered the whole scheme. A cable message arrived from across the sea. Leslie saw his mother's face turn white as she nervously tore it open. "Am being invalided home in a week," she read breathlessly. "Do not worry; England will soon set me right. Love to you and Leslie—Daddy."

Such an event as this had never come to Leslie's mind, and he felt himself run hot and cold all over.

"Mamma," he said, and his breath came in quick jumps. "Is daddy *really* coming back?"

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His mother tore off a cable form that she had just filled, and opened her purse.

"Yes," she cried gaily. "Isn't it splendid? And mother's going to nurse daddy well again." She held out the form to him and placed two sovereigns in his hand. "Now, dear, run off with this and give it to Mr. Ben. It's a message for daddy from you and me."

Leslie hesitated. Supposing he should meet the vision at the post-office? Now he had become the one person in all the world that he wanted least to meet. Oh, why could not mother understand that he did not want to be a beastly soldier?

But his mother looked at him reproachfully and said:

"Why, Leslie, don't you want to send a message to daddy?" And so he took the form and the money, and, gulping back the tears that *would* intrude, rushed from the room.

Outside the drive he paused, and glanced anxiously down the village street. A sigh of relief escaped him as no sign of the vision's stalwart form appeared in sight. Still he might be smoking in the post-office, the boy thought, and with many fears he entered.

"Good-morning, Private Travers." And there loomed up the vision seated upon a pile of biscuit tins at the further end of the shop. Leslie turned to the door, and made as if to fly. But the warrior's voice restrained him: "Halt! Private Travers, 'Tenshun!"

"I don't want to be a soldier any longer," said the young recruit, standing stiffly to "attention."

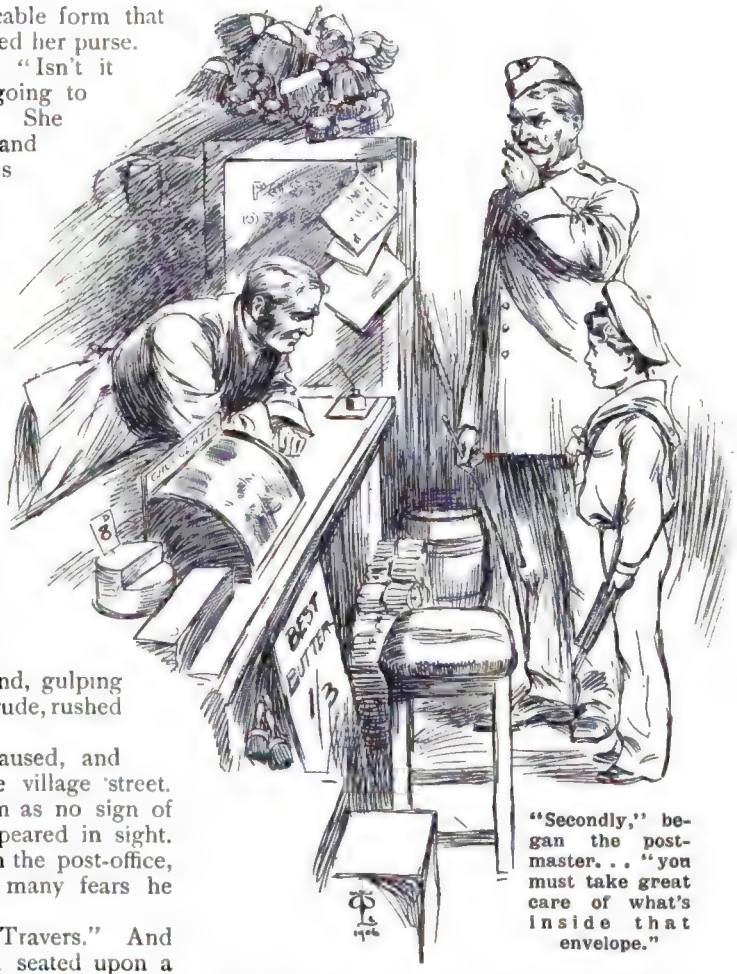
"Eh?" said the Recruiting Sergeant. "Eh—a deserter?"

"Daddy's coming back from the war, and so I could not be with him. And if you please, Mr. Recruitin' Sergeant, I want to leave off being—On His Majesty's Service."

"I wonder what the King will say when he hears that," remarked the vision solemnly. "And after givin' orders for such a beautiful ship to be got ready to take you out."

Private Travers handed the cable form and the two pounds to the post-master before replying:

"But I thought I was going out to daddy, and 'course I don't want to fight if he isn't there."




"Secondly," began the post-master. . . "you must take great care of what's inside that envelope."

The Recruiting Sergeant looked very perplexed.

"You see," he said, "if you don't go you'll place His Majesty in an awful fix, because when I told him you had 'listed he counted on your going."

"Oh, but I can't, Mr. Sergeant—I can't really," Leslie persisted. "I'll ask mamma what I must do. I can't really go."

"Haven't you told your ma?" queried the post-master with some surprise.

Leslie shook his head.

"I did try, but I couldn't tell mamma. She would have been—so very sad," he added. And Private Travers' lips moved tremulously.

"It's most difficult for a soldier, when once he has 'listed, to get out of His Majesty's Army," the vision remarked, tugging his huge

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moustache thoughtfully. "Still, Private Travers, under the circumstances, I'll think it over, and see if anything can be done. But it's most difficult, Private Travers." And the warrior shook his head expressively.

"Oh, but you are quite sure that the King won't make me go to the war?" the boy persisted anxiously.

"We shall have to hear what His Majesty says," the Recruiting Sergeant replied. "Now, 'course, if he says: 'Private Travers, you're to go to the war,' why, Private Travers, you'll just *have* to go."

"But you are going to London, brother, this afternoon," interposed the post-master suggestively. "And maybe, perchance, you won't be far from the Castle."

"Ah, to be sure," said the vision. "It had quite slipped my memory. It's most lucky for you, Private Travers, that I do happen to be goin' up to London. Now, if I should chance to be near Windsor Castle to-morrow, I'll just drop in an' see His Majesty. 'Course, you see, it will be very awkward if King Edward has to stop the war all through his countin' on you. Dees-miss, Private Travers."

"Am I still a soldier, then?" asked Leslie blankly.

"'Course, Private Travers, you are," answered the Recruiting Sergeant, "and you can't help being one until you hear from the King whether you are to hand in your papers." ("The thing in the envelope, my dear," murmured the post-master, by way of explanation.) "An' now, Private Travers, dees-miss."

The afternoon that followed was the most uncomfortable that Leslie had ever spent.

Tea-time came round at last, and at that hour Leslie and his mother usually told each other everything that they had done during the day. But to-day, with all the terrible thoughts on his mind, he nibbled gingerly at a piece of bread-and-butter, and scarcely spoke a word.

"Eat your bread-and-butter, dear," said his mother, "and then you can have a piece of cake."

"I don't want any cake, mamma, thank you," he said quietly. "I'm not very hungry."

The pretty, girlish face turned to Leslie with some concern. "You are excited, dear," she said. "Daddy's coming back has made you too happy to eat. Never mind, mamma and you shall have a splendid game of soldiers after tea."

"Oh, but—but, mamma, I—I don't *want* to play at soldiers!" he cried, nearly jumping from his chair, and gazing at her with horrified eyes. Then, his face becoming a fiery crimson, the terrible confession fell from his lips: "Mamma, I'm a real soldier. The Recruitin' Sergeant's listed me, an'—an', oh, mamma, I—may—be—sailin'—out—to—the—war—when—daddy—comes—sailin'—home." And Private Travers burst into tears.

"Little boys should not do things without first telling their mammas," said his mother softly.

"But supposin' the King cannot go on with the war without me!" said Leslie, brushing his eyes with the back of each hand, and feeling much better now that he was able to speak. "An' supposin', 'cause the King has got the ship ready, he says I must go! An' supposin' the Recruiting Sergeant should not see His Majesty when he dropped in at Windsor Castle—'cause he's going to do that!" the boy added hopefully, and speaking all in a breath. "Oh, mamma, I can't go to the war without daddy is there—I really can't."

"I think," said his mother, drying his tears with her handkerchief—"I think that the only thing to do is to write to the King yourself and to ask him to forgive you."

Leslie's face became instantly covered with interest.

"Supposin' I did!" he whispered in awe. "Supposin' His Majesty had a letter from me, he would know just why I wanted to stay at home."

When the tea-things had been cleared away a solemn little boy sat at the table holding a pencil in the most incorrect fashion, and thinking with all his might. It was very hard to write to a King, especially when you had never done such a thing before:—

DERR KING.—(at last he began in very big letters, drew a long breath, and then proceeded)—The Recrewtin Sargent, who is Mr. Benn's brother, and Mr. Benn is our post-marster—the Recrewtin Sargent 'listed me in—(he inspected the writing on the top of the long envelop: before continuing)—Your Majesty's Service. Please, dere King, will you let me stay at home, 'cawse Daddy is cumin back from the war? And I wood not have 'listed if I had thorted Daddy was cumin' back. The Recrewtin Sargent says he may drop in to see Your Majesty about me to-day. Please do not send me to the war.

Hoaping you will not find it very orkward, 'cawse the Recrewtin Sargent sed you mite—

I am—(again the envelope was called into reference)—on Your Majesty's Service, and your affecshunate

PRIVATE LESLIE TRAVERS.

A sigh of relief escaped him when, with infinite pains, he scrawled on the envelope:

THE KING,
WINSOR CASTLE,
LUNDON.

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"I've done it, mamma—I've writed to His Majesty!" he cried excitedly, holding the envelope for her to see. "And now——"

"It's time for my little soldier to be in bed," said his mother smiling.

"Oh, but it must go to His Majesty to-night," pleaded the boy earnestly. "It's very, very important."

"Then mother will take it herself," she promised.

All the next day Leslie hung vainly about the gate at the end of the drive, watching for the postman to bring a letter from the King. In the afternoon he interviewed the post-master on the subject. Yes, the old man informed him, he did, now he came to think of it, notice a letter addressed to His Majesty. He did not mention that his sitting-room for the once had been metamorphosed into Windsor Castle itself, and he himself to Edward VII., King of Great Britain and Ireland, Emperor of India, and Defender of the Faith. But what he did say was, that his brother would be home in a couple of hours, and that it was not at all unlikely that the King might send a message by his hands.

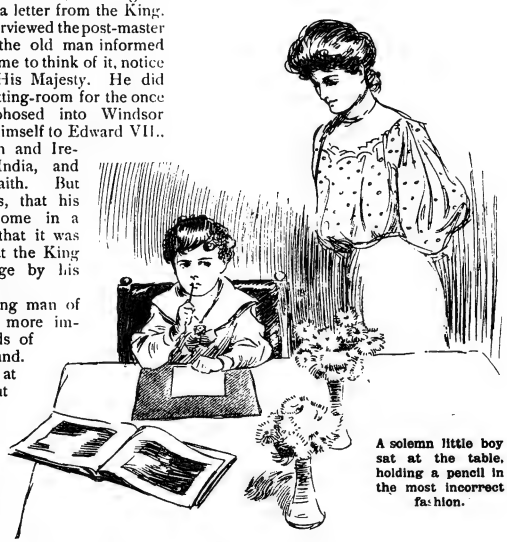
Never did any young man of eight summers watch more impatiently for the hands of the clock to go round. Not a caller arrived at the front door without having first received a careful scrutiny from a pair of eager eyes hidden behind the folds of the dining-room curtains. But it was not until the midst of tea that the presence of Sergeant Ben was announced at the front door. The vision held in his hand a long envelope, and looked very tall and grave.

"Is it from the King?" Leslie whispered, running up to him and glancing at the letter timidly.

"My brother says it's remarkably like His Majesty's handwriting," answered the Recruiting Sergeant. "An' it's for you."

"Will you tell me what it says, please, Sergeant Ben?"

The Recruiting Sergeant placed a pair of black-rimmed spectacles on his nose, slowly opened the letter, and cleared his throat and read:



**A solemn little boy sat at the table, holding a pencil in the most incorrect fashion.**

MY DEAR PRIVATE TRAVERS,—

Your l tter quite upset my plans. I had, of course, counted on your going out to the war. But Recruiting Sergeant Ben, who is a fine fellow (the Sergeant choked modestly) and a particular friend of mine, dropped in to see me ye-terday, and explained why it was you did not now want to go It is very awkward; still, I must try to get on with the war without you. You must, therefore, stay at home with your mamma until you grow big enough and clever enough to serve me as well as your gallant daddy has done

Hoping this finds you well as it leaves me at present,

I am,

THE KING.

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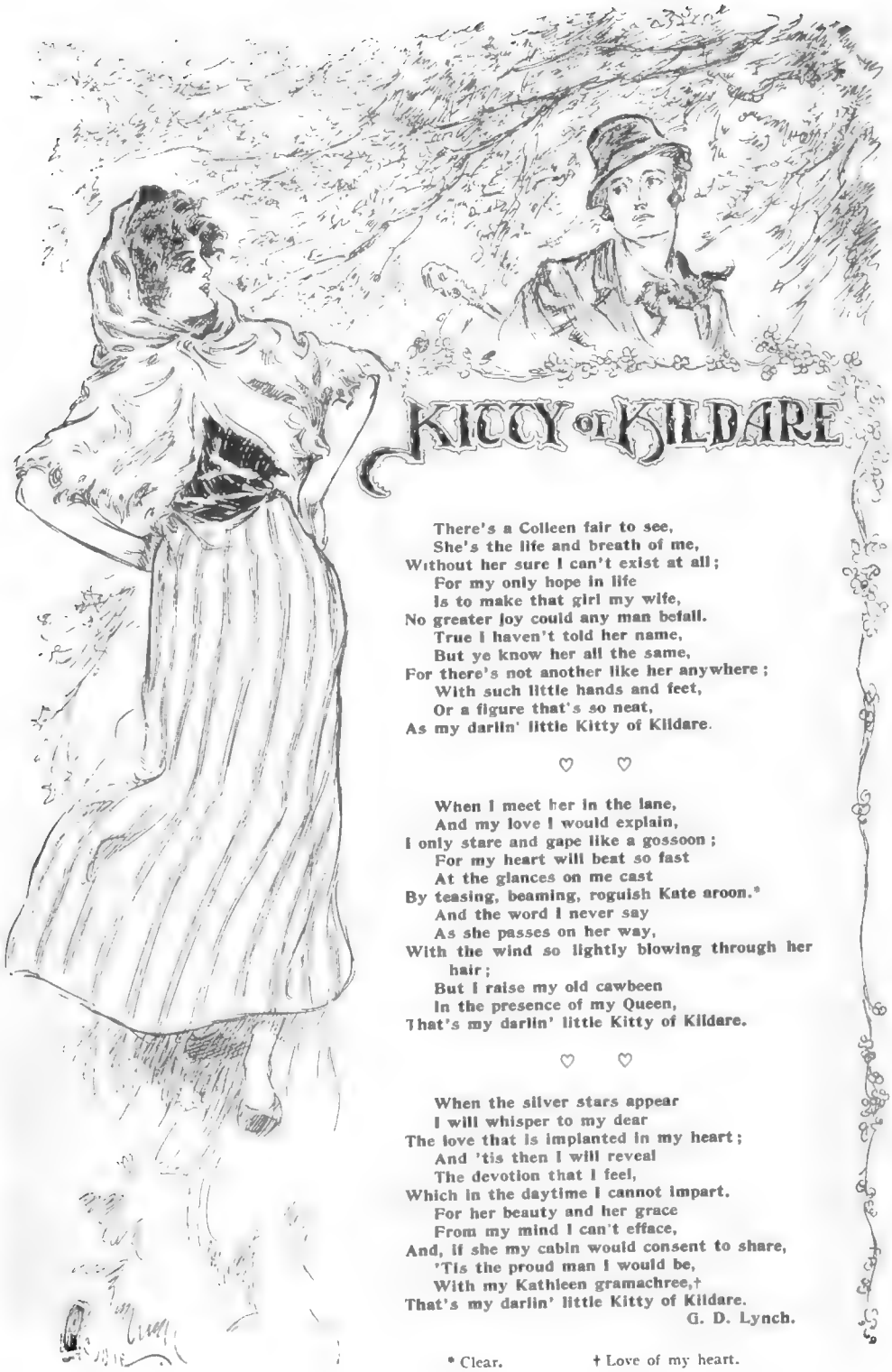

# KITTY OF KILDARE

There's a Colleen fair to see,
She's the life and breath of me,
Without her sure I can't exist at all;
For my only hope in life
Is to make that girl my wife,
No greater joy could any man befall.
True I haven't told her name,
But ye know her all the same,
For there's not another like her anywhere;
With such little hands and feet,
Or a figure that's so neat,
As my darlin' little Kitty of Kildare.

♡ ♡

When I meet her in the lane,
And my love I would explain,
I only stare and gape like a gossoon;
For my heart will beat so fast
At the glances on me cast
By teasing, beaming, roguish Kate aroon.*
And the word I never say
As she passes on her way,
With the wind so lightly blowing through her hair;
But I raise my old cawbeen
In the presence of my Queen,
That's my darlin' little Kitty of Kildare.

♡ ♡

When the silver stars appear
I will whisper to my dear
The love that is implanted in my heart;
And 'tis then I will reveal
The devotion that I feel,
Which in the daytime I cannot impart.
For her beauty and her grace
From my mind I can't efface,
And, if she my cabin would consent to share,
'Tis the proud man I would be,
With my Kathleen gramachree,†
That's my darlin' little Kitty of Kildare.

G. D. Lynch.

* Clear. † Love of my heart.

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# "IT."

BY FOX RUSSELL.

*A . . Snake Story.*

EVERYONE said, at starting, that this would be a very stupid and uneventful voyage. Before we had got clear of Table Bay it was known that there were absolutely no amusing people at all amongst the fifty first-class passengers (for the *Simonia* was one of the smallest of the Cape liners, built before the modern leviathans were even thought of). But when, on the day after starting, our captain made a certain announcement to us in the saloon, our ideas changed as in a flash.

We had all finished our midday meal, and the linen-coated servitors were running about removing the plates and dishes, and clearly hinting that they would prefer our room to our company, when the chief steward, with face pale and hair dishevelled, rushed up to where the captain was sitting at the head of the table and hastily whispered in his ear.

Then it was the skipper's turn to go pale. He ran his fingers through his hair, and the perspiration stood out on his temples in beads. He half rose from his seat, looked somewhat helplessly around him, and then, straightening himself with an effort, thus addressed his hearers:

"Er—ladies and gentlemen, I—I—I don't want any of you to be alarmed needlessly, but something has happened——"

"Oh, we've sprung a leak!" gasped a nervous passenger sitting beside the ship's doctor.

"We've struck a rock!" cried another.

"Oh, why don't they lower the boats?" agonised a young female. "Why waste precious time?"—and she immediately rose and hurried to her cabin to throw herself on her knees and commence to—pack.

"The fact is—don't scream, ladies, I beg—the fact is, we are carrying some live cargo, and it—part of it—has got out!"

"Which—which part, captain?" came a chorus of voices.

The skipper passed his hand across his brow. In all his thirty years' experience at sea he had never found himself in such a horrible predicament before.

"Well, it's—it's—the—the python!"

From that time forward we hadn't a dull moment.

Captain Jakes went on deck like a man in a dream. Mounting the bridge, he called to the bo'sun to pipe the hands aft—and every available man that could be spared from duty jauntily obeyed the summons. Then the skipper, placing his trembling fingers on the after-rail, addressed these words to them:

"My lads, it is my duty to inform you that there is a snake—a very big snake—loose on board this vessel—and I don't deny that this places us all in a somewhat dangerous position." (By this time most of the crew were looking about under the shadow of the bulwarks, and peering round corners with eyes starting out of their heads.) "Now, I suggest that we—I mean you—should all set

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to work to search the ship thoroughly, and if you discover IT" (here the cabin-boy gave a faint scream, and was promptly cuffed by the bo'sun, whose own face was even whiter than the lad's)—"I say, if you discover IT, one of you report to me, whilst the rest remain to keep watch." (Here a chorus of "Yes, sir; I'll report to you, sir," interrupted the speech—"reporting" seemed more popular than "remaining.") "Don't touch it yourselves" ("No, sir, we won't"), "but on your reporting its whereabouts to me, I—I"— here, putting aside his air of hardy heroism, the skipper added meekly—"I'll send the nigger who feeds the live-stock to tackle the job!"

And, if niggers ever turn white, Sambo, the "cullerd pusson" in question, nearly accomplished the feat.

"Of course," went on the captain, "we must not lose courage." And his voice quavered into a thin, reedy treble as he concluded.

The crew slowly dispersed—there was a notable lack of joking and no jauntiness whatever in their demeanour now. IT had apparently taken the starch out of them already. The ship was then industriously, but cautiously, searched, without result.

In the chart-house the skipper was gazing abstractedly at the live-stock invoice—upside down. But he had read it aright too often that day to require any more information. The list distinctly said: "Four monkeys; one python, extra large specimen; two springboks; two dozen rabbits."

And when the ship's butcher, together with the "cullerd pusson," had been to feed the live-stock that day, the python case was empty, and the lid lying unfastened and partly broken. All this he knew, and knew by heart; but still he stared at the list—upside down, as I said before.

The entire female portion of the passengers had taken refuge in their state-rooms, and declined, under any pressure, to leave them except for meals. The stewards had a terrible time of it waiting on them. Bells were ringing throughout the entire day and until "lights out" in the night.

Some of the unhappy ladies even went so far as to implore the much-harassed captain to lower a boat and maroon them on some desert island, or even on the savage West Coast of Africa, so that they might escape the awful, haunting fear of suddenly coming face to face with the huge reptile. And the captain had great difficulty in assuring them that that part of the South Atlantic was absolutely "out of" desert islands, and that cannibals of the most ferocious description were all they could hope to meet on this part of the West Coast.

Not an hour of the day passed without some fresh alarm being raised, and, before forty-eight hours had gone by since the awful discovery, everybody on board the good ship *Simonia* was suffering from a very decided attack of nerves.

"IT must be getting awfully hungry," observed the fourth officer on the fifth day out from Cape Town, while still the awful snake made no sign.

The "fourth" was a sandy youth, and rejoiced in a red nose and freckled face. Seating himself upon what was apparently a coil of wet rope, he took his pipe from his pocket and was proceeding to fill it when, with a wild leap into the air, he gave a hair-raising yell, and fled madly round the chart-house, charging right into the chief officer coming in the opposite direction, and bringing him heavily to the deck.

Apologies and mutual explanations followed.

"I—I—I actually *sat right on the thing!*" gasped the "fourth," every bit of colour having left his face. "For one moment IT was quite still, and then I felt IT begin to slide under me! Ugh! If I live to be a hundred I shall never forget that awful sensation!"

He wiped the sweat from his brow, trembling from head to foot. The chief, as became the dignity of his position, tried to pooh-pooh the incident. But there was no heartiness in his denunciation—the reproof he felt he ought to administer died, still-born, upon his lips.

"Don't alarm the others, but come and show me where the—where IT is lying," he said. "I—I have a revolver—I always carry it loaded now—and we might——"

"Are you a good shot?" asked the other anxiously. "Because if you miss——"

"Well—er—I never *have* fired anything off in my life, but they tell me," he said, somewhat nebulously—"they tell me I should have been a good shot if I'd ever had any practice. Come on—if we could shoot the thing, think what a relief it would be to all on board! At present the ship's company—or, at all events, the female part of it—is in a state of siege!"

They crept cautiously aft. It was blowing pretty stiffly, and, though the sea was still moderate, there was a liveliness about the vessel which kept the decks clear. And passengers, moreover, even the most courageous of them, had grown suddenly fond of

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**Some of the unhappy ladies even went so far as to implore the much-harassed captain to lower a boat and maroon them.**

the well-lighted saloon and smoking-room below. Even bezique was preferable to a chance meeting with IT. The two officers practically had the deck to themselves.

The "fourth" suddenly gripped his companion by the arm.

"Look!" he whispered, pointing to a heavy, dark coil as he spoke.

The chief, peering round the foot of the mainmast, cocked his revolver, and advanced a step.

The dark coil still lay motionless, and, after waiting another minute, the two men again whispered.

"Are you sure it's—it's IT?" asked the chief anxiously.

His companion nodded, forgetting that the nod could not be seen in the dark.

Just then a fitful gleam of moonlight shot athwart the object they gazed upon. There could no longer be room for doubt. Their eyes were fixed upon a harmless coil of good Manila rope. The chief pocketed his revolver in silence. And in silence it was that the two men walked forward, thinking their own thoughts. They parted without exchanging a word, each wondering what the other thought of him.

The succeeding days brought no sense of relief, even though time to a certain extent familiarised the *Simonia's* passengers with the horrible notion of the danger stalking in their midst. Every man who possessed a revolver always carried it about with him, and nobody ever ventured to take a seat without making a previous careful inspection of its immediate surroundings. Captain Jakes was standing moodily listening for the hundredth time to a request from Mr. Mossy Funkenstein to burn more coal, and thus shorten the terrible anxiety felt on board.

"Coot cracious, captain!" said the excitable, dark-skinned little dealer in Cape diamonds, "vhy don't yer shofe along and get der ting done vith and off yer mind? I'm not a nervoth man, but—— Thuffering Moseth! whath that?"—skipping agilely out of the way, as a length of hose pipe was dragged along the deck for fire-drill purposes.

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**The chief . . . cocked his revolver, and advanced a step.**

The captain sighed wearily, and Mossy, having satisfied himself that his fears were groundless, returned to the charge.

"Strange that no one has seen IT all this time," mused the skipper aloud.

"Yeth, he muth be getting doothed hungry if he ain't been fed. Prapth 'eth been feeding on raths."

"Or my poor cat, which has disappeared since yesterday," observed the skipper gloomily.

Then both men relapsed into silence, and turned to watch the fire-drill.

Part of the performance was for each allotted boat's crew to "stand by to lower." One of the hands had just swarmed up the davits, and was loosening the ties of the cutter's covering, when, with a frightened shout, he slid down again much quicker than he had ascended.

"IT's in there, quartermaster," he cried breathlessly—"in the bottom of the boat! You can see the shape of it quite plain under the sail-cloth!"

The quartermaster looked at him doubtingly. False alarms had been many, and the constant cry of "Wolf!" was beginning to fall upon unresponsive ears. After a moment's pause he said:

"Climb up there, Jack, and stir it up with a long boat-hook."

"How long?" queried the seaman, with more than a shade of anxiety in his tones.

"I believe you're afraid!" said the quartermaster with a sneering smile.

Then Captain Jakes struck in:

"So do I. So *you* take the boat-hook, quartermaster, and show him a good example yourself."

Whereupon the smile faded from the face of the quartermaster, and was transferred to that of the seaman.

Slowly—very slowly—the quartermaster swarmed up the forrard davit, carefully refraining from putting his fingers over the gunwale of the boat. Then the boat-hook was handed up to him, and Captain Jakes, looking to his revolver, which he held as an

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old woman holds a darning-needle, cried out:

"Hit him over the head, quartermaster. Don't be afraid; I'm not!"

"I don't see no sign of—— S'help me bob! there he is!"

And the quartermaster slid down to the deck again with a rapidity highly meritorious in so stout a man.

No one would venture up to look into the boat after that.

"I saw the sail-cloth cover move, sir," reported the quartermaster; "it suddenly bulged up from below, as if it was one coil passing over a thwart; there was no mistake about it."

"We must have the cover off the boat," decided the captain. "I suppose none of you'll volunteer to get into the boat to cast off the—— Ah, I see—well, I'm not entirely surprised. Some of you stand by to lower. Mr. Saunders" (indicating the chief officer) "and I are armed—we cannot well miss it between us, although we are not exactly accustomed to firearms. Now, are you ready? You've all got axes or belaying-pins in case IT crawls on deck? That's right Stand by, and directly the boat touches the water, be prepared, Mr. Saunders, to fire with me. Together we will fire a volley. Request the officer on the bridge to ring down to the engine-room to stop her."

Directly the *Simonia's* engines were at rest, the men at the falls let them run pretty sharply through the blocks until the boat touched the water alongside. But there was no sign of the snake—the eager crew peered downwards over the bulwarks in breathless anxiety. And then part of the canvas covering suddenly heaved.

"Look!" "There you are!" "What did I say?" "Where's the gun?" etc., etc., burst from the lips of a dozen excited seamen.

A moment later, and with a loud "mew!" the skipper's big tom cat emerged from beneath the sail-cloth covering. A sudden silence fell upon the crowd, which had been gazing, spellbound, from the ship's deck above.

Without any order to do so, the men began in a shamefaced kind of way to hoist the cutter up again to her place. If a cat could be unharmed in the boat, certain it was that no python harboured therein.

Captain Jakes and his officers preserved a discreet silence regarding this incident.

Three days later the ship let go her anchor at Plymouth to land her mails and passengers.

The latter had subscribed an address and a small purse of money "in recognition of Captain Jakes' coolness and courage in the face of an unlooked-for danger."

This the skipper blushingly accepted, expressing his gratitude in a neat little speech after dinner, on the last night but one of the voyage.

When the ship's agent came on board at Plymouth he said casually to the captain:

"By the way, those people at the Cape, the Van Ryns, have sent some live-stock on board you?"

"Yes," began Captain Jakes in solemn tones, "and I'm sorry to say the python has been——"

"Left behind. Yes, I know," interrupted the agent. "Fact is, it died at Cape Town the day you sailed—we had a cable three weeks ago."

This was another thing about which Captain Jakes and his officers preserved a discreet silence. IT had never been on board at all!

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## THE ACTOR'S TALE.

**Ah! gentlemen, did I but choose,**
**How many strange tales I could tell!**
**Once I was nearly slaughtered by**
**The bursting of a shell.**

**'Twas hurled one night upon the stage—**
**Your ill-bred mirth suppress, I beg—**
**And to this day I've ne'er found out**
**What villain threw the egg!**

**Charles Vivian.**

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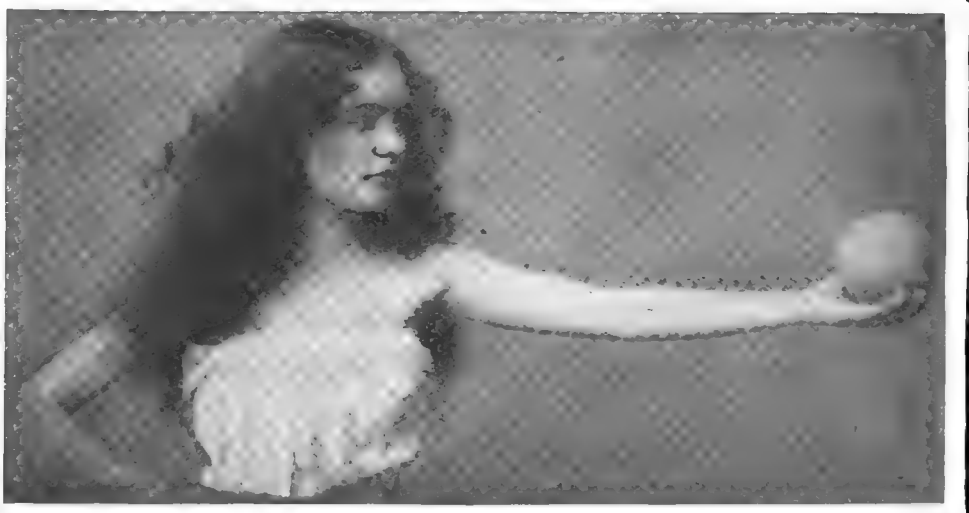

# The Woman Beautiful

## No. I.—A PAIR OF GOOD ARMS AND A SET OF SHAPELY FINGERS.

By Augusta Prescott.

*This is the First of a New Series Appealing Specially to Our Lady Readers. The Articles are Written by the World's Greatest Expert in Beauty Culture, and are Fully Illustrated. The Second Article, Which will Appear Next Month, will Deal with Wrinkles.*

In the days of the happy old love story, when Marmaduke proposed to Amanda he invariably asked for her hand He did not care whether he had her heart or not, so long as he had her hand!

The hand has played a very important part in the peace conferences of history. Its tiny weight has brought down the balance and turned the scale in matters of more than national import. In love affairs its *rôle* has been a stirring one.

A man has fallen in love at first sight with a woman with beautiful hands, but never with a woman with bad ones. He has worshipped four pretty fingers and a shapely thumb, and has knelt down and kissed the same, while an ugly outfit of fingers and a stubby thumb would have had no attractions for him whatever.

Fashions in hands change. And the hand that is the fashion to-day is not the hand which was in style yesterday.

There is a new hand, and women who want to be beautiful are studying it. They realise that the hand of this year is not the hand of a year ago.

For the athletic hand has gone out—the heavy, broad, brown athletic hand of the past half decade. It was called the golf girl's hand, and it was the product of much athletic enthusiasm. It was a big, hard hand, useful and efficient. But it was not a pretty hand.

Now Dame Fashion has swung back to the hand of the last century. In shape it is tapering, in size moderate, in colour it is distinctly feminine. It is called the Victorian hand.

It is a beautiful hand to gaze upon and a satisfactory hand to own. Fortunately for envious womankind, the hand is pliable, and the Victorian hand is such that every woman may possess it. Were it otherwise, the description of the ideal hand would read like a description of the moon—very alluring, but impracticable.

Now, the Victorian hand is a practicable hand. All may own it. Spread out your own hand upon a table before you and study

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The flesh-brush keeps the arms white and plump, but it must not be plied too earnestly. . . . The arms should be scrubbed once a week.

it. Lay it upon a sheet of white paper and mark around it. Know its awkwardnesses.

The hand of the average person is peculiar. It has certain characteristics, many of them hereditary, most of them cultivated. There are marks and blotches, carvings and twistings, and there are certain little personal idiosyncrasies which have come with the years.

First of all, realise that everything of this kind tends to destroy the beauty of the hand. Anything which makes it irregular takes away from its good looks. The hand should conform to a type, and if it does not it is not a pretty hand. It should be made to grow pretty. All sewing marks, pin-pricks, scars, and deformities should be overcome.

The most serious thing which happens to the hand is that it begins very early to grow old. The hands of the girl are plump and pretty, tapering and smooth. The veins do not show and the knuckles do not protrude. But at thirty the hands begin to age. A strange and almost imperceptible change begins to creep over them. The flesh falls away, the skin wrinkles, the veins stand out, and the hands have a strenuous look. They show age more quickly than the face. The knuckles get big and the finger-rings come on and off very stiffly. It is old age creeping upon the hands.

To keep them young should be the first aim of every woman who wants pretty hands. She should work over them until they look youthful again.

The first rule for restoring them to youth is to give them back the natural oils which they have lost. And this can only be

The massage of the arms is very important for those who have red and thin hands.

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Take in the hand a little weight, about half-a-pound, and slowly, as though handling something heavy, straighten the arm with the weight in the hand. Extend it and bring it back twenty times. This will develop a thin arm.

done by rubbing. It is not massage, but a rubbing in of the needful oils. The best thing for keeping the hands young is a cream which can be made at home.

To make the cream, which is called sweet clover cream, take a double tablespoon of mutton tallow and add to it a single tablespoon of almond oil. Put in a sprig of sweet clover and heat all together. Take off, lift out the clover, beat the cream with a little egg-beater, and, as it cools, add a few drops of oil of rose geranium. The cream, when nearly cold, is poured into empty egg-shells, in each of which there is a drop of attar of roses. The shells, with their burden of fragrant cream, are finally suspended from the side of the dresser.

The cream should be white and clear and firm. This must be rubbed into the hands and arms every night after they have been washed with very hot water.

The flesh-brush keeps the arms white and plump, but it must not be plied too earnestly. A little soap jelly made at home should be dissolved in a full basin of hot water, and to this there should be added a scattering of powdered oatmeal. With this the arms should be scrubbed once a week. This keeps them clear in tone and a delicate cream in hue. It also keeps them soft, but it is too searching for daily use. There should be a little peroxide in the water if there is a tendency to "down" upon the arm.

Open the hands wide and lift them. Bring them together over the head. Extend them wide, bring them together again, close them, open them, and so on until you have performed the motion fifteen times.

The massage of the arms is very important for those who have red hands and thin arms, for while the hands are being

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attended to the arms should also receive their share of notice. For thin arms there are three movements which should be practised every night.

The first one is quite simple. Take in the hand a little weight, about half-a-pound, and slowly, as though one were handling something heavy, straighten the arm with the weight in the hand. Extend it and bring it back twenty times. This will develop a thin arm.

The second is a hand and arm exercise also. Open the hands wide and lift them. Bring them together over the head. Extend them wide, bring them together again, close them, open them, and so on until you have performed the motion fifteen times.

The third motion is a swaying one, and is specially for the whitening of the hands and the development of the lower arm. Lift the hands as high as you can. Take a deep breath. Lower the hands to the sides. Breathe deeply again. Do this ten times. The result will be a fattening of the forearm, the part which shows in elbow sleeves, the lower arm, the most neglected of all the parts of the human body! A weight carefully lifted and lowered will help to develop the upper and lower arm equally.

Do not rest the elbows upon a hard surface, for fear of making them rough and ugly, hard and disagreeable. If they are hard, lather them with soap at night; let dry, and wash off in the morning.

Lift the hands as high as you can. Take a deep breath. Lower the hands to the sides. Breathe deeply again. Do this ten times. The result will be a fattening of the forearm.

The hands should be plump and white and tapering; and in order to accomplish this a great deal must be done for the finger-tips, for upon their shape the taper largely depends. The nails are very important, and deserve a special study all by themselves.

Before filing the nails, the finger-tips should be soaked in tepid water highly scented with toilet vinegar or a few drops of eau-de-Cologne.

The trouble with the nails is that they are the prey of the emotions. People bite them; they twist them; they break them, and they ill-treat them, while the only thing that really should be done for them is to let them grow.

There is a story told of a London Society woman



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who went to a beauty doctor in Paris, taking with her a pair of very unshapely hands.

"What shall I do, doctor?" questioned she. "My hands are a disgrace to me."

"Wear gloves for two weeks," said he.

Then, sending out for a pair of gloves two sizes too large, he filled them with a very thin layer of softening paste, and incased her hands in them.

"Once a day take off the gloves," said he, "and loosen the flesh at the base of the nails. Otherwise do not remove the gloves except to wash your hands."

The lady did so, and at the end of two weeks she came back with a set of beautiful finger-tips. The beauty doctor shaped the nails to suit the curve of the finger-tips, and, after giving them a high polish with benzoin, sent his patient away happy.

If the nails are very brittle, they can be polished with a little powder rubbed in the palm of the hand.

There are three kinds of nail: the convenient square nail of the business woman, the rounding nail of the athletic girl, and the pointed nail of the Society woman. The last is the most beautiful, but one must not make the point too sharp; and it must be exact. A rounding point is the most becoming to most hands

The rule in the good manicuring establishments is to file the nail with emery boards until it suits the shape of the fingers. A pointed nail upon a fat finger is not so good as a rounding nail. The nail, too, should be rather short, but it should also fit the finger which it adorns. Before filing, the finger-tips should be soaked in tepid water highly scented with toilet vinegar or a few drops of eau-de-Cologne.

To make the finger-tips taper simply let them have their own way. Incase them in gloves when doing rough work, or even ordinary work, and at night sleep in gloves lined with glove paste. If this is unpleasant, the hands can be rubbed with cream each day before the working gloves are put on. Do not form the habit of clipping the nails.

Chapped hands are so unusual nowadays that they scarcely need a word, and hands that are red are hardly to be found, though one does occasionally see poppy-coloured ones. Hands can be kept in perfect order by a few simple appointments of the dressing-table, among which there should be these:

A bottle of home-made cucumber lotion for bleaching the hands.

A lemon mixture for removing stains.

A good hand cream for rubbing into the hands at night.

A little stone jar of glove paste for softening the hands.

A good nail emollient to keep the nails from becoming brittle.

A jar of powdered oatmeal, a cake of good soap, and a pot of home-made soap jelly. A bottle of lanolin, and peroxide for whitening the arms. The contents of the manicure-table are quite different, though no less important

There should be a bottle of home-made perfume for scenting the bowl of water. There should also be a bottle of thin, soapy mixture for hastily preparing the finger-bath. Besides these, there must be a dish of pink polishing powder, a supply of emery boards, and a few sharpened orange-wood sticks. Another essential is a bottle of polish to preserve brittle nails, and a brush with which to apply it.

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# EVIE

*The History of Two Love-Stories.*

♡

By
Owen Oliver.

♡

When a fellow grows up he thinks of things that he didn't notice when he was young. I was fifteen last June, and I began to see that I should have to look after Evie this summer. She's my mother; but I've always called her that, because father died when I was a baby, and there was only the two of us, and we were chums. She isn't the ordinary sort of mother, but frightfully good-looking and jolly. Lots of people take her for my big sister, and you would never dream she was thirty-five, if you didn't know it.

It was the holidays that worried me most, because we always went to the seaside, and you get to know such a crowd of people there. Even last year, when I was only fourteen, I couldn't help seeing that all the men were hanging round her; and the other day she let out that that bounder Smith actually had the cheek to propose to her. I shouldn't have thought so much about it, if she had told me at the time; but it made me suspicious to find that things like that could go on without my knowing. I didn't mean to have a stepfather, so I made up my mind that we wouldn't go to the seaside this year, but to a quiet place in the country, where she couldn't get into mischief.

She raised her eyebrows and shrugged her shoulders, and made a funny face, like she does, when I proposed it.

"The country!" she cried. "Why, Jackie, there'll be nothing but cows and pigs—and pigs and cows."

"Oh, yes, there will," I told her. "There'll be birds' nests and blackberries."

"Blackberries!" She pinched me. "They won't be ripe for months yet!"

"Oh, well," I said, "there'll be corn and things."

"Corn and fiddlesticks! There'll be no bathing, no boating, no niggers, no pier concerts—no anything! You won't have a soul to talk to."

"Oh, yes, I shall," I told her. "I shall have you."

That put her all right in a minute. (I knew it would.)

"Very well," she promised. "We'll go to

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the country and enjoy each other's conversation, and I daresay I shall find a few other nice people to talk to."

I wasn't easy about that, because she generally manages to do what she wants to; but I meant to look after her pretty sharply.

We hunted through a lot of guide-books and advertisements to see where to go. We picked upon Rushbury, because there was a nice little house, with a river at the back and a boat, and the servants would be left, and she wanted to give our girls a holiday. She wrote about it, and it wasn't too dear. So we took it and went down there.

It was a decent little house, and the river was all right. We boated all day for three days. Then Evie got tired of it, and said she'd rather stay in and read. She had a boxful of novels. I found it dull by myself, and it made me savage to see the people playing cricket and tennis and not asking me to join in, and I wished we'd gone to the seaside.

On the Thursday morning after we came I was going to suggest a day trip to Seabury, but, when I began to mention that there wasn't much to do, she asked why I didn't go blackberrying. So I wouldn't give her another chance to rot me, and went and played tennis by myself against the side of the house. It was a bore having no one to speak to, and I was glad to talk to Sarah, the housemaid, when she came out to shake the mats. I told her that Rushbury was a dull hole, but she said it wasn't.

"You want some friends, Master Jack," she sai l. "That's what it is. Why don't you get to know the doctor's young lady, across the road? She's just about your age, or a year younger. Fourteen last May she was. And the doctor would just suit your mother. A handsome man, I call him, and been a widower these nine years; and she thinks as much of him as you do of your mother. And you ought to, for she's the pleasantest lady that ever *I* knew. And Miss Maisie will be just such another. Just suit you, she would."

"I don't want to know girls," I said. "I want to play cricket."

"The doctor's the captain of the cricket club, and the best player for miles round, and used to play for the county when he was younger. Not that he's old—barely turned forty. You'll be all right if you get to know *him*."

"But I can't get to know him," I grumbled. "That's just it."

"You can always get to know a doctor," she declared

"How?" I asked.

She pretended to consider.

"You might go and tell him you want a tooth took out," she suggested.

"Don't be an idiot!" I said, and threw the tennis ball at her, and she giggled and ran in. I knew she went and told Evie, because I heard them laughing like anything.

I went to the gate to see the doctor start on his rounds and find out what he was like. He was a fine-looking chap, and no mistake, and the doctor-girl was a regular stunner. I had half a mind to say good-morning to him, but I happened to glance round and saw Evie peeping out ot the window. I smelt a rat directly, because he was just the sort she would talk to, if she got the chance. So I decided that we'd better not know him; but I thought I would know the doctor-girl. I meant to speak to her directly the doctor was gone, but I couldn't, because she ran in.

"That's a pretty girl across the road, Jackie," Evie said when I went indoors, "and very like her father. I wonder if we shall get to know them?"

"I hope not," I growled, and she looked at me.

"I'm afraid your tooth is troubling you," she said. "Would you like me to take you to the doctor?"

Of course, I knew she was getting at me.

"There's nothing the matter with my teeth," I said. "It's only—you——"

"I expect it's the country," she said. Then she ran upstairs and put on her hat, and went out shopping. I saw her say good-morning to the doctor-girl. (She was at the gate.) Of course, she knew she'd get to know the doctor if she knew the girl. She's jolly artful. But I can be artful, too, and I thought I would get friendly with the girl first, and keep her out of Evie's way. Besides, she looked the right sort of girl to be friends with.

It's easy enough to get to know a girl if she doesn't mind knowing you. I just walked out in our garden and knocked a tennis ball about, and presently I gave it a terrific whack and sent it right across the road into her garden, and went after it. She helped me look. When we found it I asked her to knock me up some catches; and then I gave her some. (She could catch jolly well.) Then I said I couldn't find any nice walks at Rushbury, and she said there were lots, and I asked her to show me, and we arranged to go after lunch.

She was an awfully sensible girl, and knew where to find birds' nests, and how to make

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catapults, and she didn't mind climbing trees or jumping ditches, or taking off her shoes to wade. So she was as good as a boy, only she talked more. Her name was Maisie Bruce. She thought a lot of her father, and told me all about him, and I told her about Evie.

"My mother's simply ripping," I told her. "She'll do anything for a fellow, and she never gets 'ratty,' so you can tease her as much as you like; only you're sure to get the worst of it because she's so sharp. And you can see for yourself she's ever so good-looking."

"Yes," Maisie agreed. "I know she is. That's the worst of it."

"The worst of it? What do you mean?"

She shrugged herself just like mother does.

"I mean that—I've said what I didn't mean to say—I don't like nice-looking ladies, because—well, how would you like your mother to marry again?"

"Oh!" I said. "I see! *He's* beastly good-looking, too; and I believe she's noticed him."

"He's noticed her, anyway." Maisie shook her head. "He was watching her play catches with you this morning before breakfast. He let his coffee get cold, and I had to call him three times. Jane saw him, and I heard her tell cook that they would make a handsome pair."

"Whew!" I whistled. "We'll have to plan together to stop it. It's a good job we know one another."

"Ye-es," said Maisie; "but they will get to know one another through us, you see."

I whistled again.

"We mustn't let them find out that we know one another, if we can help it," I said. "Only Evie's terribly smart at finding out things."

"Who's Evie?" Maisie asked like a shot.

"Only mother!" I told her. "It's what her particular friends call her, and we're a sort of friends, don't you see. She's more like a big sister than a mother."

"I know." Maisie nodded. "I call

"My mother's simply ripping," I told her. "She'll do anything for a fellow."

father my big brother. They're so nice that they couldn't help liking one another, and everybody gets acquainted in this poky little place. Whatever shall we do?"

"Can't you make him go away for a holiday?"

"I daresay he'd take me away, if I asked him to." She looked at me in the sort of way that seems innocent and isn't. I've often watched Evie take people in like that. "Shall I?"

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"He needn't take *you*," I objected.

"Oh! But I couldn't let father go all alone. Couldn't you persuade *her* to go?"

"Do you want to get rid of me?"

"Not specially." She laughed. "Would she take you?"

"No," I said in a dignified way. "I should take her. I always look after my mother."

"And I always look after my father; and I don't want anyone else to. We *must* keep them from getting acquainted. I think I can manage him if you can manage her. Father isn't very hard to manage."

"Umph!" I said. "Evie is! I shall have a lot of trouble with her."

I did! She saw directly that I didn't want her to let the doctor make friends, and was always teasing me about him; and I wasn't sure that it was all joking, either.

First she talked of writing to a friend to get some introductions to people in the village. Her friend was a doctor. So I knew what that meant! When I had coaxed her off that, she pretended that she had a headache, and said I'd better go and ask the doctor to come and see her; but I said she'd better have a cup of tea, and come out on the river, and that would cure her.

The next morning she beckoned to Maisie to come over and talk to her; but Maisie pretended not to see her, and went in.

"I felt such a little beast to do it," she told me afterwards. "Your 'Evie' is such a dear! She *is* lovely, Jack. I always feel as if I could hug her!"

"That's how I feel about the doctor," I owned. "I don't mean about the hugging; but he looks such a decent sort. He half stopped when I met him in the village this morning, and I had to scuttle into the nearest shop so that he shouldn't speak. It was an ironmonger's, and I bought a mouse-trap!—I bet he'd have asked me if I'd like a game of cricket."

"He said you looked like a player, and he expected you'd be glad to have a game. He asked if I knew you. I said you'd spoken to me, but I thought you were dreadfully forward!"

"I say——!"

"Well, you are!" We both laughed.

"He said you were like your mother."

"What beastly cheek!"

"He didn't mean behaviour. He meant looks. You ought to think it a great compliment."

"It isn't a compliment to *her!*" I said. "The idea!"

"He wanted to call," she went on, "and ask if we could do anything for you; but afterwards he thought that I had better do the calling. I said I'd think about it. I'm still thinking!"

"Do you good," I told her; "but don't do it—call, I mean."

"As if I should! But suppose they introduce themselves?"

"They can't very well. Evie isn't shy, but she's quite—proper. It's all right if we keep out of the way. Where shall we go this afternoon?"

"The woods," she said. So we went.

We kept out of their way for a whole week, and they left off bothering us about one another. I thought it was rather a shame leaving Evie so much, but she didn't seem to mind. After supper she always sat down to the piano and played and sang. She sings well, and Maisie said that her father used to go and lean on the gate and smoke his pipe and listen to her, because he was fond of music; but he hadn't said any more about her calling.

"And she's given up talking about him," I said. "So it's all right, thank goodness! I simply couldn't stand a stepfather. They're brutes. At least, I don't suppose *he'd* be; but he'd make *me* feel one."

"A stepmother is worse," Maisie declared. "They're always horrid, and won't let you do anything. But Evie is all right in herself, of course—— I should like to call her Evie, if I knew her."

The Thursday fortnight after we came mother seemed quite excited, and danced me round the room after lunch. She felt as if something were going to happen, she declared. "Something wonderfully wonderful, Jackie, boy! Are you going out this afternoon?"

"I was," I owned; "but if you want me to take you anywhere——"

"No-o," she said. "I—I don't think so."

I was jolly glad, because Maisie and I had arranged to go along the river banks, unless they wanted us.

"All right," I said. "Good-bye."

"Good-bye, Jackie." She caught hold of me suddenly and kissed me. "Suppose your Evie did something that you didn't like, Jackie—something that she thought was right, but you didn't—something that you had always told her not to—would you forgive her?"

"You're not going in the boat alone?" I asked quickly. "You know you can't

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manage it." She always runs into the bank, and she can't swim.

"No," she said. "I'll promise not to go in the boat alone. I—— It's nothing. I only wanted to know."

She looked at me for a long time and I looked at her.

"Say something nice, Jackie," she begged. She has a frightfully coaxing way when she likes.

"I think you are a perfect brick of a mother, Evie," I said, "and I'll forgive you any jolly thing you like; and what have you done?"

"Nothing," she said. "Thank you, Jackie."

Then she tripped upstairs singing, and I ran all the way to Court Lane to meet Maisie, because I was late. But she was later than I was. Her father seemed to want to talk to her about something, she said, but it wasn't anything particular, after all—only about some beef-tea for old Mrs. Jackson.

"I was so afraid it was about your 'Evie,'" she said. "You see—if he told me that he *really* liked her—I don't see how I could be unkind to father. But I was so glad that it wasn't. I think they've quite got over it; don't you, Jack?"

"I'm sure *she* has," I said, "because she never mentions it; and she isn't thinking of anything because she's as lively as a cricket."

"So's father," Maisie told me. "I never knew him smile so much—they're a very jolly father and mother, aren't they?"

"Just the right sort," I agreed.

We went along the river banks and pulled bulrushes, and caught "tiddlers" with our hands, till we came to the big oak that hangs over the river and nearly reaches the other bank. It is hollow inside, and we climbed up and sat with our legs dangling in it.

Then we heard voices and . . . peeped through the branches and saw a boat coming down the river.

We had been sitting there for a long time, and Maisie was telling my fortune from my hand. The line of love began when I was fifteen, she said, and it was a dark girl; but I shouldn't know till I grew up that I liked her. I said the line was all wrong, or else she was, because I did: and I'd tell her fortune. She wouldn't let me look at her hand, and we nearly fell off the tree fighting for it. Then we heard voices and stopped scuffling, and peeped through the branches and saw a boat coming down the river. We

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could only get glimpses of it through the trees, but we saw that it was a fellow and a girl.

"Lovers!" Maisie whispered and giggled.

"Silly idiots!" I said. Then the boat came just where there was a space between the trees, and we both jumped.

"Evie!" I said.

"Father!" said Maisie.

It was. He was sitting with his back towards us, rowing, but he only took a stroke now and then. She was sitting in the stern, looking down at her feet and dragging one hand in the water. He took hold of the other whenever he stopped rowing. When they were just underneath us, he leant on the oars and said: "Evie!—Evie dear!" And she looked at him and laughed, and bent a little towards him——!

"That settles it," I whispered miserably. "She wouldn't let him if they weren't engaged."

"Some girls would," Maisie said.

"Evie wouldn't. She thinks too much of herself. I might have known she was up to something."

"I'd *never* have believed it of father!" Maisie declared. "To get to know her, and never say a word to me all the time! And he likes her better than me!"

She began whimpering, but she left off when I made a fuss of her; and we decided that we wouldn't live with a stepfather and stepmother when we grew up, but with one another; and then we considered what we would do to pay them out.

"He won't like telling me," Maisie said, "and *I* shan't help him. I know *just* what he'll do. He'll keep coughing and looking at me to try and make me ask him what's the matter; but I shan't. Then he'll keep letting his pipe out and looking for the matches, and I shan't offer to get them. Then he'll begin about the dispensary and the garden or something silly, and try to lead up to it; but I won't let him. Then he'll get desperate and give me hints, but I shall be as stupid as anything and not understand. Then, when I'm going to bed, he'll blurt it out at last, and—and all our nice time together will be over." She wiped her eyes furiously. "I won't be nasty to father," she said, as if she wanted to quarrel with me about it. "I *won't*. But I hope you'll give it to *her!*"

"Give it to Evie!" I cried. "Me!—No fear!—But I'll let her have a bad time telling me. I know just how she'll come in, and talk very fast about nothing, and keep altering her hat in front of the glass, and moving the ornaments, and looking at me with her head on one side. Then she'll—Oh! I never know *what* she'll do or say; but she'll bring it out somehow, however I try to turn her off—and—I say, Maisie, she *is* a good sort, and so is your governor. Suppose we make up our minds to be decent to them?"

Maisie wiped her eyes again and nodded very hard.

"That's just what I was thinking," she agreed. She is a kind girl, really.

As I said, you never know what Evie will do. She didn't beat about the bush, as I expected, or give me half a chance of having any fun with her, but caught hold of me directly she came in and pulled me down on the sofa beside her.

"Oh, brother-boy!" she cried, "be good to your little mother. She's a little mother who loves you. Jackie, I—I——"

She didn't seem able to go on. So I put my hand over her mouth.

"I saw you in the boat," I said. "It's all right, Evie. It's all right, mother, dear."

"Oh!" she said. "There was never such a brother-boy as mine! You *kind* old Jackie. If only she would make it as easy for her father as you have done for me."

Maisie did better than I did, really. For she just ran up to the doctor when he came in, and put her arms round his neck.

"I hope you'll be very happy, daddy," she said, "and I'm going to like her. Take me over now" And when they came she rushed at mother and hugged her, and the doctor and I pumped hands for ever so long. Then I shook hands with Maisie for a change.

"You'll be brother and sister," the doctor told us.

Maisie went red. So did I.

"No fear!" I said. "Will we, May?" And she shook her head.

"What!" cried the doctor. "Oh! I *see!* Well, you haven't taken long to make up your minds!"

"We've been chums all the time," I explained.

The doctor looked at Evie and she looked at him. Then she sat down on the sofa and laughed and laughed.

But Evie turned serious all of a sudden, like she does, and took hold of all our hands.

"A dear son," she said, in the soft way that she speaks when you aren't well, "and a dear daughter, and a dear—someone else. God's in His Heaven!"

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# Real Life Romances.

*The Editor is Prepared to Pay Liberally for Contributions to these Pages, Five Hundred Words in Length, Submitted by Readers. All Stories Must be True, and Fully Substantiated.*

## Marvellous Presence of Mind.

**A DOCTOR'S ROMANCE.**

THE liner *Osiris*, bound for Australia, was ploughing her way through the Indian Ocean at the rate of seventeen knots an hour. It was midnight.

In a few minutes, however, Dr. Smith, a passenger, ascended from the lower regions, and commenced to pace up and down in the night air. The atmosphere of his cabin he had found too oppressive to be borne, and so he resolved, being unable to sleep, to enjoy a cigar on deck. Overhead, the stars shone and the masts and funnels of the liner loomed vast and spectral in the pale light of the moon.

Dr. Smith reflected how foolish he had been not to leave his berth earlier. What could be more enjoyable, since sleep was denied him, than solitude and a choice cigar on the deck of the good ship *Osiris*?

Suddenly . . . the maniac lifted Dr. Smith bodily in the air, and held him over the ship's side.

Suddenly he became aware of the fact that he was no longer alone. A dark figure appeared at the head of the companion ladder. Not wishing for company, Dr. Smith strolled slowly away, and leant over the starboard side of the liner. Suddenly he turned, and saw a fellow-passenger, who suffered from *delirium tremens*. "Hullo, Doctor!" exclaimed the new-comer pleasantly. "Do you know what I am going to do? I'm going to wring your neck, and throw you overboard!"

Suiting the action to the word, the maniac seized Dr. Smith in a grip of iron.

Then ensued a frightful struggle. Realising the awful peril which menaced him, the Doctor struggled with despairing energy to bring his assailant to the deck, but in vain. He was like a child in the man's grasp.

Suddenly, with a superhuman effort, the maniac lifted Dr. Smith bodily in the air, and held him over the ship's side.

"Do you hear—do you hear?" he gasped. "*I'm—going—to—drop—you—overboard!*"

The Doctor's heart almost ceased to beat. There was no one about except the steersman, but he was at the other end of the deck. Then an idea came to him.

"All right, old man," he replied, "but let's have a drink together first."

"Very well," replied the maniac, depositing the Doctor on the deck, and strolling towards the bar.

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# The Romance of a Couple of Suicides.

**TELLING HOW THEY WERE NOT ACCOMPLISHED.**

CENTENARINI cast his eyes around his squalid little lodgings, and counted himself the most miserable man in New York. Six months before he had landed in the great American metropolis an alien, a stranger from Savoy.

He would work hard. He would grow rich. And he would in a few years sail back in the best saloon on one of the great ships.

Such were the thoughts of Centenarini until, returned one evening from his work, he discovered a letter awaiting him. One glance at the handwriting, one look at the stamp in the corner, and he knew that his little sweetheart whom he had left behind would soon be speaking to him.

Lighting the lamp and drawing the chair up to the table he began to read. His face paled. What was this she said? Her parents wished her to marry another man at once—worse still, were forcing her by constant persuasion to yield to their wishes. She was fast being driven mad.

The little woman from Savoy would speak softly to him.

Centenarini felt the beads of perspiration stand icily on his forehead. Still he read on, until with a cry of horror the last line stood out before his eyes—"I have decided that I can endure this no longer, and I shall kill myself."

All night he lay awake filled with a mortal fear. He would catch the next ship to Europe. He would see her parents, and—and if she were dead he would kill them and the man that had come between him and happiness.

There would be many funerals in Savoy if he arrived too late.

A week later he stood on board an ocean liner. He was still mad with rage, and longed to reach his native land. He would have leapt overboard in sheer despair had it not been that among the passengers he discovered a charming little woman, ready to listen and to comfort him with kind words of hope.

She, too, came from Savoy and knew some of his friends. Many long hours he talked to her; told her the reason of his homecoming, and how that should he arrive too late he himself meant to die upon the grave of his murdered, for thus he chose to regard her, *fiancée*.

Then the little woman from Savoy would speak softly to him, and tell him how mad and foolish were his thoughts; that even though his worst fears did come to pass, still there must be another woman who could love him. Strangely enough, as each day bore him nearer to his journey's end he found himself becoming most surely less and less interested in the object of his mission. The fierce thoughts of vengeance had now completely left him, and their place was filled by something far more charming and sympathetic. It was the little Savoy woman with the silvery voice. They were married at Havre the very day they landed, and here this strange story of love would end but for one little circumstance.

Centenarini discovered a letter awaiting him at the post-office. It was from his home, but this fact did not cause him much concern. Opening it, he broke into a roar of laughter.

For in the letter he read that his old sweetheart was not lying dead in the little graveyard. Instead, she had married the other man, and now declared that her choice was by far the better one.

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# The Romance of a Ring.

**HOW IT WAS LOST AND FOUND.**

WILKESBARRE, in New Columbus, was in a flutter of excitement when the news of the engagement of Mr. George Well to the daughter of one of the leading families was announced. The wedding, so the local paper asserted, was to take place shortly, and at the Episcopal Church.

Naturally, in the two houses most intimately concerned in this matter, great preparations were being designed and put into execution. Already the honeymoon had been arranged, and a visit to the Old World marked its programme. Almost everything had been completed.

Nothing that the combined heads of the patresfamilias, not to leave unmentioned the matresfamilias, of the two respective houses could conceive had been overlooked.

Only the little magic ring was wanting.

And that arrived on the second day before the wedding, and with it a pearl and diamond necklace, and some jewellery that the bridegroom intended to present to the bridesmaids.

The strangest bouquet that any man had ever presented to his *fiancée*.

George Well examined the little ring, and read again and again the minute lettering within the golden circle—his own name and that of his little bride.

Then he repaired to her house. But first he slipped the ring in his waistcoat pocket. "For on no account," had said the girl that soon would be his, "must you let me see my wedding ring before we are married—it is sure to bring bad luck." "Silly little child," he had replied at the time. Still it was her wish, and he had respected it.

At length the "great day" dawned. It was his wedding day. The heart of George Well was light. The world stood out before him in dazzling splendour. Not a cloud lay on the horizon, not—his hand sought something from the pocket of a waistcoat. It sought in another pocket, then another.

A look of consternation spread over the man's face. The ring had vanished. Search again and again, he could not find it. Turn every pocket's lining out, no vestige of the precious circlet could he find.

As, blaming his carelessness, he related his story, he saw a tear fall down the girl's now pale cheeks.

"I know it means misfortune," she sobbed. "And—and it is no good getting another ring."

She was superstitious. This much he well knew. But to be filled with so much fear over the loss passed his comprehension.

Then the final blow fell with an unexpectedness that he had never dreamt of.

"George, I dare not marry you unless you find the ring."

* *

Weeks went by. Yet the ring remained lost. He would have paid any reward for its recovery. Yet no reward caused it to reappear.

Then Fate began to work her wiles. A cabbage, stunted and deformed, stood annoyingly present amongst a bed of fine-grown plants.

Bending down, George Well plucked it from the ground. A gleam of yellow metal flashed for a moment in his eye.

There, closely bound around the cabbage root, lay the little circlet that had caused him such misfortune.

* * * * *

The strangest bouquet that any man had ever presented to his *fiancée* everyone in Wilkesbarre agreed, yet the most precious, as some out of Wilkesbarre may admit.

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# A · SPRING · IDYLL

*"In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love."*—TENNYSON.

"Welcome, Spring!
Hail to thee!"
Maidens sing,
Full of glee.

Brighter skies;
Shining sun;
Banished sighs;
Lovers won.

Blissful dreams
Come in Spring;
Wooing seems
Just the thing!

Couple meet;
Pleasant walk;
Shy and sweet
Cosy talk.

By-and-by,
Parting; pain;
Couple sigh;
Meet again.

Then a call:
See mamma;
Feeling small
Near papa!

Little dance;
Charming quite;
Happy chance—
Starry night!

Garden; stroll;
Cupid's dart;
Thrilling soul;
Beating heart.

No one nigh;
Fears that flee;
Just a sigh;
Down on knee!

"Oh, be mine!"
"Ask papa."
Bliss divine!
Tra, la, la!

Time is brief;
Blushing miss;
Stop the thief!
Stolen kiss!

Wedding, June;
Dance and sing—
That's the tune
In the Spring!

H. J. Holmes.

WESMOND.

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# A Beagle's Diary

*In which He Describes the Adventures which Befel Him on his First Day's Hunting.*

By Jessie Pope.

(*A beagle is a small hound used for hunting the hare. The chase is followed by both sexes on foot.*)

6.0 A.M.—Wake with a start. Vaguely wonder what I am—too dark to see. Sudden shock in left eye reminds me I am nothing less than a beagle puppy, full grown, son of Chantress, pride of the pack, and Ranter, suppressed earlier in the season for inveterate rabbit-hunting. Sudden concussion due to Bounder, my brother, being at his games again. Desire him to explain the presence of his paw in my eye—replies he was merely stretching and relapses into slumber.

6.10.—Stretch also, with identical results. Bounder quite shirty about it. Asks if I want a hiding. Invite him to come down off the bench and see.

6.20.—Glorious rough-and-tumble in the dawning light—could have outed him with one paw behind my back but for unwarrantable interference on the part of Lusty, our uncle, and Lucifer, our grandfather.

6.25.—Fought the lot. Quite a family gathering.

6.30.—Entrance of kennel huntsman with big whip. Wrong dogs tanned as usual. "Fine example to set puppies!" says he, leathering uncle and grandpa. Cordially agree with him. Lick blacking off his boots in token of goodwill—rich, fruity flavour.

6.50.—Retire to bench to resume well-earned slumber.

7.30—Disturbed by stirring rumour in kennel that we are going hunting to-day. Haven't been chosen myself so far. Bounder went last time—very sidey beforehand, and reticent afterwards, I noticed. Join in general excitement and restlessness, and develop good chest note. Bounder, I may here mention, can't bark for little apples.

6.25.—Fought the lot. Quite a family gathering.

8.30.—Arrival of the Master, accompanied by kennel huntsman, to inspect and choose pack. Hurry to the front, am particularly pushful with caresses, and, by climbing on Bounder's back, manage to lick Master's little finger. Also, get a free sample of his blacking, and a kick for my pains, which sends me back to the bench with something to think about. Some people are very grudging with their love and sympathy.

8.40.—"We'll try a puppy or two to-day," says he.

Bounder pushes forward.

"Not Bounder!" says he.

I chuckle.

"Where's Mirthful?—Mirthful! *Mirthful!*" yells kennel huntsman. "Hoick to him! Where are ye skulkin' to!"

Glance round myself and wonder where the slacker is. Find them all looking at me, and the lash round my flanks. I hoick over. So *I'm* Mirthful, it appears. Should never have guessed it!

"We'll try Mirthful," says the Master. "*Not* Bounder."

8.50.—Approach Bounder in

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triumph. "Hear that, old dog," I remark. "What wouldn't you give to be in my place?" "About half what you'd give to be in mine before the day's out," he replies with a dark sneer.

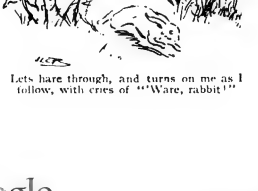
10.30.—Arrival of van at door of kennel run. Old hounds troop obediently up plank into dark interior. Advise me to follow. Not me! I'm going hunting. Sneak away under wheels. View kitten in yard—after her in full cry, practising chest notes. Should have pulled her down in cucumber frame, but for kennel huntsman and his all-embracing whip.

10.40.—Am ignominiously chucked in van tail first. Fancy I hear Bounder chuckling. Will pay him later. Van begins to shake and wobble. Feel scared and agitated till fall across mother and several aunts. Quite pleased to meet them. "If *this* is hunting," I say to mother, "I'd rather stop at home." "You wait a bit, my son," she replies, "and don't talk so much."

11.50.—Van suddenly comes to a standstill. Kennel huntsman appears at back with plank. Push my way down first, and find myself in a strange world. Strange wind blowing. Strange mud. Strange grass and strange smells.

11.55.—Strange people in knickerbockers and short skirts crowd round pack. Twelve couple and a half (that's me). Am tremendously admired by all, and am affable in return—especially to young lady in a green velvet cap, golden curls, and very short skirt.

"Dear little Mirthful," says she, as the Master comes up to her; "what long ears—what a black nose and great, big, slobbering mouth!" Am charmed by her intelligence and return her compliments *in toto*, and from look in the Master's eyes am convinced he does the same. Both stoop down and fondle me. Hands get mixed up. Slobber over both indiscriminately.



Lets hare through, and turns on me as I follow, with cries of "Ware, rabbit!"

"Did you get my letter?" says the Master in a low voice.

"Yes," says she, "but it's no use you writing like that."

"Do you mean that?" says he. Even I knew she didn't, but without waiting for her reply he snaps out: "Very well, then; I shall sell the pack and go to blazes."

At that she laughs, and stands upright. "Give us some good hunting for the last day, then," says she—and he turns on his heel without another word.

Follow, a little downheartedly, through a gap into a field of roots.

12.5.—Start off down road at brisk pace behind the Master. Villagers hurry to their doors to watch me go by. Field follows at respectful distance, only the Master, Whips, and hunt servants being allowed the honour of walking with hounds. Would have made an exception of Golden Curls myself.

12.15.—Enter grass meadows through gate. Fresh wind blowing, dew lying thick. Nine separate and individual scents, and the white tail of a rabbit bobbing along the bank. No wonder I lose my head and give chase, followed by 1st Whip. Excellent opportunity for both of us to show the field a bit of pace.

12.25.—Whip wins. Return to pack, tail down. "Better watch me," says mother angrily. "Do what *I* do, and you won't go far wrong." Follow, a little downheartedly, through a gap into a field of roots. Suddenly she gives tongue. At the signal the pack bunches together, then stretches out in flying line in full cry. I follow, and next moment *I am in it myself*. Glorious, indescribable, intoxicating influence; maddening my senses and urging me on faster and faster, wild to get away in front of them all, to the very heart of it.

1.20.—On, on—over roots, grass land, water meadows and plough. Scent suddenly fades. Glorious sensation evaporates, and run hither and thither in

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distress, whimpering to find it again, encouraged by cries from the Whips and toots from the Master's horn.

1.30.—Wander up a hedge-row, still seeking to renew glorious sensation, and come across Golden Curls struggling through, very pink in the face, with her golden curls falling over her blue eyes; big rent in her short skirt which she is vainly trying to mend with a hairpin. 1st Whip, in pursuit of me, hastens to give assistance with gold safety-pin out of his stock—accepting hairpin in its place. Notice the Master scowling at them both, and leave them at it, continuing my way up hedge-row. Come across quite a nice little scent—pocket edition of last. Cheer'o!

1.30.—"Look after that puppy, will you!" shouts the Master savagely, as I give tongue after a plump little rabbit. Pursued by 1st Whip, familiar cries of "'Ware, rabbit!"; familiar lash round my flanks; familiar return to pack with tail down.

1.40.—"They think I don't know a rabbit from a hare, I suppose," I remark shrewdly to mother, "but my motto is: 'When you can't get the thick you must take the thin.'" Mother advises me not to make a fool of myself, and favour father more than I can help.

"I *must* say good-night to little Mirthful," she says.

2.0.—Pick up true line again, piloted by mother, and away once more with the rest of the pack over interminable plough.

2.15.—Checked once again. Scent rotten. Master morose, Whips irritable. Determine to strike out line for myself. Slink off up ditch to far side of hedge, alone and unobserved.

All of a sudden hunted hare springs up in front of me. Give tongue, and after her as fast as I can put paw to plough. Hare rolling beat. Honour and glory at last. All on my own, too. Get a mouthful of fur. She spurts forward, making for gap in spinney, but finds Golden Curls standing there, alone, to head her off. Hare glances back at me, ears down, eyes goggling with terror; then looks at Golden Curls. Golden Curls looks at hare, and suddenly steps aside from the gap. Lets hare through, and turns on me as I follow, with cries of "'Ware, rabbit!" for benefit of Master and Whips, who come bursting through hedge, attracted by my music.

"'Ware, rabbit!" she cries. "'Ware, rabbit!" they echo, the fools taking her word for it, while three separate lashes curl round my body. In vain I try to point out in my best yelps that *indeed* it is *no* rabbit but the *hunted hare*, and the woman has betrayed us. Even mother turns from me in disgust.

2.30.—"I shall have that puppy killed," says Master; "he's no sort of use—he'll never make a decent hound!" They all hear it—field, pack—even the clod-hoppers who straggle after us.

3.0.—Creep away by myself. Find a deep furrow and lie down. Expect to die of broken heart quite shortly.

4.30.—Am roused from despairing doze by sound of voices approaching. Somebody stumbles over me in the half light. Golden Curls again.

"That's right!" I yelp. "Kick me—any little thing like that."

"Why, it's Mirthful," she says tenderly, and looks across to where the Master is leading hounds home in the dusk. She calls him. He comes to heel at once, though she has no whip, and leaves Whips to take hounds on.

"*Here's* poor little Mirthful," she says, "dead beat and very unhappy. Pick him up and carry him back."

"He's hardly worth it," he replies.

"Yes, he is," she says. "I want you to give him another chance."

"He's spoilt our day," he continues gloomily; "he'll spoil the pack. I must weed him out."

"Come now, don't be cross, let's make friends over him," she says softly.

"I don't want to be *friends*. I've told you that," he replies.

"Well, then," she says slowly, "let's be—what you want to be."

4.45.—Am carried home under the Master's arm, quite affectionately, and deposited in hound van once more. Find mother

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inclined to ignore one entirely, though other hounds find me a good object for chaff. Always strongly object to chaff myself, and fancy this must be a hereditary instinct, as, without warning, mother suddenly lifts her lip and goes for the lot of them.

"Never you mind," she pants in my ear—when she has settled the matter to her entire satisfaction—then adds aloud, "you're a smarter hound than any couple of them put together, and that's not saying a deal."

6.0. Van stops. Door at back opens and hounds troop down plank into kennel run. "Come along," says mother, pushing first. I try to rise, but I am absolutely stiff; my legs are evidently paralysed and my back apparently broken.

"Hoick, over — Mirthful — skulkin' again," calls the huntsman as he puts in his hand to feel for me. I lick it with enthusiasm—he returns the compliment; but it is the voice of Bounder, raised in a sneering bark at sight of me hauled out stern first, that makes me my own man again.

6.15. Have a great time at the food trough—get Bounder's lumps of meat every time—consider meat unnecessary for a hound who hasn't been hunting; and, talking of hunting, it's all very well, but I prefer to do mine in a trough.

6.30. Just dropping off to sleep on bench, when hear footsteps in the run outside, and soft voice calling me by name. Find Master and Golden Curls standing in the run outside, hand in hand, having slipped away from hilarious hunt tea. "I must say good-bye to dear little Mirthful," she says, and as she stoops down and kisses me between the eyes she whispers:

"I *will* tell him all about it, Mirthful, dear, but not till after we're married."

Too full of meat and meal to bear malice any longer, I languidly lick her ear, and fall asleep on the bench at peace with all the world—Whips, rabbits, rats, Golden Curls and Bounder.

## DREAMS.

**The evening silence deepens, and I see**
**A little figure flit from room to room;**
**Its childish cheeks are rosy as from sleep,**
**Its tumbling curls flash golden in the gloom.**

**Why is it that throughout the barren house**
**I hear a baby voice ring shrill and sweet?—**
**That sometimes on the stairs I think I hear**
**The quickened coming of its tiny feet?**

**I dare not speak—I fear to break the spell—**
**But both my longing arms are opened wide—**
**In vain—it only smiles and shakes its head,**
**And leaves me listening to the rain outside.**

**Bertha F. E. Draffen.**

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# SURVIVORS' TALES OF GREAT EVENTS

Mr. William Samuel Clark

## XXVI.—THE TRAGEDY OF MAJUBA HILL.

FROM THE NARRATIVE OF CORPORAL WILLIAM SAMUEL CLARK, LATE KING'S DRAGOON GUARDS.

AS TOLD TO WALTER WOOD.

**The unexampled disasters to British arms in the Transvaal War of 1881 find an able and accurate narrator in Corporal William Samuel Clark, formerly of the King's Dragoon Guards, and invalided out of the Army with a wounds pension after thirteen years' service. The Zulu War had just been ended, when the Boers in the Transvaal, then under British rule, demanded independence—a demand which was interpreted as a rebellion. Troops were sent from Britain, India, and elsewhere, to act against them, but the campaign was a series of reverses for our own soldiers, beginning with Laing's Nek and ending with the melancholy tragedy of Majuba Hill. Peace was proclaimed, and matters rested until the outbreak of the last South African War. Corporal Clark was present at Laing's Nek and the Ingogo River battle, and enjoyed the rare advantage of witnessing, from a very short distance, the actual fight on Majuba, commanding a view of the attack, the defence, and the retreat. His story shows that, far from being a campaign of shame, as some traducers have alleged, the war gave numberless examples of the courage and endurance of the British troops.**

I LANDED in South Africa in the gloomy year of 1879, when the Empire was ringing with the mournful tales of the annihilation of a British force at Isandhlwana and the thrilling stories of the valiant defence of Rorke's Drift. I was a cavalryman, and marched straight into Zululand, to the fatal spot where the 24th had fallen under the rifles and assegais of the savage warriors.

Three months had passed since the butchery, yet even then our slaughtered troops remained unburied. They were lying where they had been shot down or speared, and all were mutilated, according to the custom of the Zulus. Every tin of preserved food, too, had been pierced—which showed that some white man had told the savages how to make it worthless.

It was a stern, terrible beginning to my soldier's life. The dead were buried about a week later; but so slightly that, when I visited Isandhlwana again, two or three years later, the field of battle, which was also the place of sepulchre, was white with bones that had become exposed.

Within a few months the Zulus were crushed at Ulundi, and the British troops were ordered down into the Transvaal, where the Boers were giving a lot of trouble. The Transvaal was then annexed and under British rule, and many of the Boers objected strongly to this system of dominion.

I was able to know exactly what their feelings were, because I was in the police during the whole of the time I was in South Africa, and as my duty was to accompany the Sheriff to collect taxes and preserve order generally, I was constantly visiting the Boers in their homes. I know that there has been long and bitter controversy on the subject of Briton *versus* Boer, and I would like to say in favour of the Boers that repeatedly I received kindnesses from them for which they refused to accept any payment or acknowledgment whatever. Those were the real Boers, the patriots who were fighting only for their

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country, and who were to wage a war which was to give them many victories, and, greatest of all, the overwhelming triumph of Majuba.

For a little while the clouds seemed to disperse—had there not been a great review of the British forces in Pretoria, to impress the possible enemy, and was not that army crowned with its victory over the Zulus?

Peace seemed to be assured, and most of the troops were accordingly sent home. My own regiment went to India, a few of us, about forty, being left behind to go to England to the depôt. All our horses were sold, and I believe they were, nearly without exception, secured by the Boers. Our accoutrements were given into stores and sent away down country. As for us, we marched to Pietermaritzburg, a strange sight indeed, for we were literally in rags. We wore anything we could lay hands on, and looked more like wandering tramps than British cavalry.

Again I was in the police, and lived in the fort, which was used as a prison. In spite of all I heard to the contrary, I knew that the Boers would fight. The actual truth came home in sudden and dramatic fashion. One day I was returning to the fort from some quarries where the prisoners — they were mostly English soldiers who were punished for such crimes as looting—had been working, when an Afrikander galloped past us on a horse. He was intensely excited, and waving a paper over his head he shouted: "It's all over with you! We've done for the 94th, and we'll do for you when we're ready!"

That was a startling enough threat, because a detachment of the 94th Regiment had been massacred by the Boers at Bronker's Spruit.

The threat was carried into the fort like a flash, and General Sir George Colley, Governor of Natal, who had been appointed Commander-in-Chief, ordered a parade that very evening. He was full of fire and hope, and had the reputation of being a brave and resourceful soldier—which he had fully earned in that land of wars.

Cavalry would be badly wanted, if the worst came to the worst—and Sir George made this clear when he addressed us.

"I shall have to form a regiment of cavalry," he told us, "and I look to the King's Dragoon Guards to help me to raise one, as quickly as possible. That regiment will be established, I know—and I will promise you one thing, men—that it shall never be taken by me into any corner out of which I cannot get it!"

Brave words by a brave man, and spoken almost under the shadow of Majuba! And how we cheered him when he spoke! We were wild with eager enthusiasm, and even the maimed came forward as volunteers. Amongst them was a gallant fellow named Cutler. He had only one eye, but he insisted upon joining, and was taken. What would you have when men are scarce and danger presses?

Horses were needed badly, and we got them in as best we could. They were mostly Cape horses, awkward, untrained, unsatisfactory brutes; but I was lucky enough to get one of our old chestnut mares, which required no drilling. Volunteers came from all classes. Some could ride, but most could not. That, however, was not a very serious matter, because we had a few horses which had belonged to the artillery, and did finely for the recruits, because they were as comfortable as old arm-chairs, and ambled round in a way that could not hurt anybody. The old stagers amongst us were interspersed so as to leaven up the regiment—and I can assure you that when it came to drilling with drawn swords, at the trot, we would rather have faced the enemy than the recruits.

In a month or so we started for the Front, and plunged straightway into disaster after disaster. First of all came Laing's Nek on January 28th, 1881, then our defeat on the Ingogo River on February 8th, and after that, on February 26th—a terrible Sunday—the overwhelming calamity of Majuba.

Our first sight of the Boers was at the pass called Laing's Nek. Eager as they were to meet us, we were more impatient to fight them, and can you wonder at this when you remember how great a trust was put in us, and our faith in ourselves?

If such a thing can be a distinction, then I can lay claim to seeing the very opening of a most unhappy war, for I was on outpost with a man named Todd when I saw a company of Boers galloping round with the purpose of cutting us off from our main body. We made a dash for camp and got safely back, to the intense surprise of Captain Brownlow, our commander. All was excitement and commotion, with hurried calculations as to what the enemy would do. It seemed as if we should be rushed, but for the time being the Boers began to withdraw.

Instantly our captain ordered some infantry who were near him to lie down and fire, giving the range at 800 yards. He chose them, I

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suppose, because he thought they would be better shots than the cavalry. They did very well, too, because two or three horses dropped.

I cannot say whether human life was claimed in this first firing of the war, because we were not near enough to the enemy to see the full effect of our practice. We had not done much, perhaps, but it was enough to win praise from General Colley. "Owing to your able scouting," he said, addressing us, "I have been able to give the infantry more scope than would otherwise have been possible," meaning, I suppose, that he had taken them over a larger area of ground. That was encouraging, but infinitely more satisfactory was his intimation that next morning he would lead us to attack the Boers and fight the first battle of the war.

Few of us could sleep during that anxious night of preparation, and no sound of trumpet or bugle was needed to make us ready for the advance. We went out, and with what seemed like appalling swiftness plunged into fighting.

The first real challenge screamed into the quiet air, not from gun or rifle, but from the Rocket Brigade, which was furnished by the officers and men of the *Dido* and the *Boadicea*, warships on the Cape station.

To that shrill hiss and crash of invitation the Boers responded instantly and crushingly. I cannot describe to you what I actually felt, but I do know that the reality was far and away more stirring and dramatic than anything I had expected. Much as I knew about the Boers, I was not prepared for such a struggle as that which confronted us. And in this I was not alone.

But there was no time for thought. We were in for a desperate business, and the only thing to do was to get it finished as quickly and triumphantly as possible. I do not think I exaggerate when I say that even then, at the very beginning of our battle, the most pessimistic of us anticipated speedy victory, and probably an instant finish to the war.

Our handful of cavalry got away to the right of the Nek, not in very brilliant fashion, perhaps, but you could hardly look for that from such a scratch mounted body. A good cavalryman is not created in a month, and some of the ready-made troopers were so unaccustomed to the saddle, and—reasonably enough—so chary of a fall, that instead of jumping an obstacle, they would walk their horses round it!

If, while we were fresh and eager, we could have been led straight into a charge, or to carry out some stiff and stirring work, it would have been more agreeable to some of us than being forced, as we were forced, to halt and endure a very heavy and demoralising fire. There we were, a fair target for the enemy, and a target that was seldom missed.

With startling abruptness a shell plumped into the very thick of us. Now, not even a band of raw soldiers will be wanting in smartness at a crisis like that. The shell was there, and every instant we expected it to burst and spread death around. We did not stand on ceremony or wait for orders—we inclined—that is to say, we opened out—and did it as smartly, too, as I ever saw that particular evolution performed.

But the puzzling thing was that the shell did not explode. There it lay, and before we could fathom the mystery of it another came, but this did not burst either. We could not understand it at the moment, but soon enough we learnt that the missiles came from our own artillery, so that at the very opening of the battle we were being bombarded by our own people. The Boers had no artillery.

Our captain was a little distance away, and did not at first realise what was happening. When he saw us scatter he shouted: "What are you men inclining for?" By way of answer we pointed to the shells.

The captain turned to me.

"Clark," he said, "gallop to Colonel Deane, and ask if we are to attack." Colonel Deane was then leading a storming party of the 58th Regiment.

It was a desperate, almost forlorn undertaking to ride across that bullet-swept ground, but I spurred my gallant mare on, and dashed towards the stormers. As I galloped I met a staff officer belonging to the Rifles—Lieutenant Inman, I think it was.

"What do you want?" he shouted.

I answered that Captain Brownlow had ordered me to ask Colonel Deane if the cavalry were to attack, and so support the stormers.

"Colonel Deane is down," replied the subaltern. "Yes, certainly, go on."

I turned my mare to gallop back to my superior officer, and almost as I did so Lieutenant Inman was shot dead. His words to me—the order to "go on"—were probably the last he uttered.

As best I could I made my way back, but the fire and energy seemed to have left my mare. She struggled bravely on, but I knew from the way she galloped that she was hit somewhere—and no wonder, for by that time

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the enemy's fire was so furious that it seemed impossible for anything to escape being struck.

At last I rejoined my commander, who was anxiously awaiting me, and I hurriedly delivered the order to advance.

"Bugler," cried the captain, turning to a little boy who belonged to the Army Service Corps, "sound the Charge!"

The boy raised his bugle and put it to his lips. Only the first wild note of the "Charge" had sounded when the poor little fellow fell dead, shot through the brain.

Tragedy succeeded tragedy. Scarcely had the bugler fallen when the captain went down, with his horse shot under him. Then fell Sergeant-Major Lunney, who commanded the first squadron, because the non-commissioned officers amongst us had been given commands, owing to the shortage of officers. I think the Boers must have aimed at him deliberately, as he was riddled with bullets.

Who in such a fusillade could escape? I myself became a marked man, doubtless owing to the fact that I was wearing a blue patrol jacket, and at a short distance looked like an officer. Two shots struck my bridle arm, shattering the elbow. The reins dropped and my startled mare dashed away, and just cleared the croup of my captain's horse. Both horses stumbled and struggled on the ground together, and there for some awful moments we lay, in hopeless confusion, with death threatening from the bullets which hailed around us, and a not less awful fate from the driving hoofs of our maddened mounts. I do not know how I managed it, but I seized the reins in my teeth, then took them on my sword-arm, the sword hanging by the knot.

Confusion, which was almost panic, reigned. Saddles were emptied, horses were kicking on the ground, shot and mangled, and men were lying all around. Some of the horses, terrified, were galloping away without riders. Captain Brownlow's was shot dead. We were in the thick of the fight now, and mixed up with the enemy.

My commander's position was one of the gravest peril, because he was lying helpless and at the mercy of the enemy. His danger was seen by Private John Doogan, a trooper of the King's, who was his servant. Doogan himself was shot through both arms, and therefore as a rider was useless; but one thing he could do, at any rate—stand by his captain under fire.

He did it, too. He gave his own horse to the captain, who did his best to rally his troops, then took the reins under his arm and led him into safety. Badly wounded though he was, yet he refused to take refuge in the ambulance. For this brave action Doogan won the Victoria Cross, and never, I think, was that decoration more thoroughly deserved. Another Cross was given for Laing's Nek—to Lieutenant Alan Richard Hill, of the 58th, who picked up a wounded subaltern and tried to bear him off the field of battle. The young officer was again shot in his rescuer's arms, this time mortally. Lieutenant Hill, undaunted, defying the deadly musketry, rushed back to the open ground again twice, each time bringing in a wounded man. So, you see, though Laing's Nek was a disaster, it was redeemed from shame by many a noble act.

I bled excessively, and felt as if I should faint. My mare, too, staggered, and as I could not control either her or myself, we collapsed together, and tumbled in a heap on the earth. For several hours I knew nothing, then Corporal Smith, of the Army Service Corps, and some Kaffirs picked me up, gave me brandy, and took me down to the ambulance—which was worse than all the fighting I had seen.

A field officer of the 58th, one of the defeated stormers, was brought in and placed alongside me. He was shot through the chest and was dying; yet he was perfectly conscious. The doctor bent down and said sadly: "I am very sorry, but I can do nothing more for you, major."

"No," replied the major, "it is all over with me."

I turned round and looked at him, with an awful fascination, and even then he asked huskily, with the kindness of a brave, unselfish gentleman: "And where are *you* hit, corporal?"

I told him, but he never answered, for even as I spoke he passed away.

They removed him when the end came, and put in his place a seaman of the *Dido*, who, like so many of our poor fellows, was badly wounded in the chest. He was perfectly conscious, but from the time they brought him in until he died he never spoke.

I was carried from the ambulance to the camp, and heard General Colley address the troops. "Men," he said, "you have not been beaten; you have simply been repulsed. With the number of troops at my disposal it is impossible to renew operations, and I must wait for reinforcements. I hope the wounded will do well. I can say no more. I wish you all good-night."

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The reins dropped and my startled mare dashed away.

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Hard things have been said of Sir George, but I know myself that he was a kind and gallant gentleman. Next day he came up and asked me if there was anybody to whom I should like to send a letter, and I told him that I would be glad to have one posted to my sister, who lived at Sandgate. The General had a letter written, which he signed himself—and to this day she treasures it.

Words cannot picture what our camp was like. We were hemmed in, and cut off from all medical comforts and necessaries—bran, for instance, was used in poultices. Marquees were filled with wounded soldiers, many of them dying, and blood was on everything you touched. The very stretchers were stiff with it. Sailors from the warships served as nurses—and splendid nurses they made, I can assure you.

I will not dwell on the reverse we suffered in the stubborn fight of the Ingogo River. For twelve hours we were under a withering fire, then the night came and we knew that we had been repulsed again, with terrible losses. To add to our gloom the night brought the most appalling storm of thunder, lightning, rain, and hail that I ever saw. In the thick of it, Captain Wilkinson, of the 3rd Battalion 60th Rifles, was drowned while trying to cross the swollen river with medical comforts for the wounded.

This second and unexpected check meant that we were in more desperate case than ever, hopelessly pinned in, as it seemed.

Perhaps some foreboding of the crowning disaster oppressed our general, for he never addressed us again. There was no short speech of encouragement or hope for us, and we knew nothing till the coming of that dismal Sunday which will always be connected in my memory with Majuba Hill.

The hill by this time was a familiar object, rising like a colossal sugar-loaf from the Drakensberg Mountains, and about ten miles from the Nek.

Our camp was at Mount Prospect, and, as I have said, we were completely locked up. We knew that only a dozen miles away Sir Evelyn Wood was getting reinforcements for us, and we had already been strengthened by the arrival of more than 600 of the Gordon Highlanders, fresh from victory after victory in India, amongst the triumphs being the Kabul to Kandahar march. They were all hard veterans, and the world could not show finer soldiers than these and our own troops who had been through the strain of war in Zululand and the Transvaal.

You may be in the thick of things in time of war and yet know very little of what is going on around you. The first I learnt about Majuba was that the great, bare hill was ours! That astounding fact was revealed to me by Dr. Babington, the surgeon in whose care I was and to whom I owe so much.

I was outside the marquee when the doctor spoke. "Look here, Clark!" he said, "it's all over with the Boers now! We've got the hill!"

In amazement I looked towards Majuba Hill, and then I saw that British troops were in possession of it, and that the Boers were already advancing to that attack which ended in such an unexpected and amazing triumph for them.

I rubbed my eyes and marvelled. How had the seemingly impossible been accomplished? How had our men got more than six thousand feet up the hill? And why? My own wits and other tongues enlightened me. Not long before midnight on the previous day (Saturday) Sir George had ordered a secret parade of a mixed force of about 550 men—a handful of King's Dragoon Guards, Rifles, Gordons, and the 58th, and a small Naval Brigade—with three days' rations and seventy rounds of ammunition. But they had no water—and there is no water on Majuba's barren heights!

The general had marched forth to seize the hill, believing that in doing so he was commanding the Boer position and insuring his own salvation. He had left 200 men at the base of the mountain to secure his communications with our camp, and in the dead of night had taken his mixed band of 350 fighting men to the very top, an almost incredible achievement. No wonder the Boers were thunderstruck next morning when they discovered that a lonely and almost inaccessible peak had been silently seized and was dotted with men who in theory, at any rate, could pick off their enemy at pleasure.

I watched the whole of that world-moving tragedy from a distance of only a few hundred yards—through the doctor's field-glasses, which he had lent me, and with which I had taken myself to a spot not far from the marquee. That was one advantage of being an invalid, with freedom of movement; and perhaps no survivor of the war was more fortunately placed as an eye-witness of Majuba than myself.

The small, heavy-laden band which had climbed up the narrow, rugged pathways of the hill in such an astonishing way—it had been an incessant struggle in dense darkness, for about six hours—was in fancied security

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Every British figure was a target, every helmet that was seen was riddled.

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on a flat piece of ground about a mile in circumference. I say fancied, because the result proved that it was the most fatal spot that could have been selected. No water was available on the hill, none had been taken up —and water is the most essential of all things in battle, when a destroying thirst assails the combatants. Yet Sir George definitely and more than once announced that Majuba Hill was to be held for three days! I am not offering explanations or expressing opinions —that is no part of my wish; I am telling simply what I saw and heard.

The general first of all had ordered that not a shot should be fired; then he changed his mind and a rifle cracked at his command. This was the first intimation to the Boers that the British held Majuba, and from that moment they set to work deliberately and patiently to wrest it from the captors.

They knew their work, and did it with a mere handful of picked men so far as the real capture of the hill was concerned. From their main body of some 2000 they detached 200 stormers, and these took such complete advantage of the cover offered, which they knew so well, that they ascended the mountain unseen by the defenders and undetected till the very moment when their withering rifle fire revealed their closeness.

Already the war had shown what deadly shots the Boers were, and now every British figure was a target, every helmet that was seen was riddled. It was not so much a battle as a *battue*, because the British troops could see no enemy to fire at, and yet they were themselves fatally exposed. They shot away their ammunition—such as they could get at from their pouches and the boxes; but many of the boxes could not be opened, and the cartridges were therefore useless.

Still watching through my glasses, I saw the wildly-moving figures on Majuba, but the idea of disaster never entered my mind until I noticed—what? British troops, the finest in the Army, men of twenty years' service, not bare-faced boys, veterans, hurriedly retreating from the hill which they had so laboriously ascended in the dead of night!

Then I knew that all was lost, and that it was a case of every man for himself. The plateau, even in that short space of time, was littered with our dead, and the line of retreat was cumbered with the wounded.

General Colley was already down, shot, not by his own hand, as some have said, but by Boer bullets, as a man who saw him die assured me; and other officers had been killed. Of the little band which the general had led up the hill nearly a hundred were left dead, some died as they tried to crawl back to the refuge of our camp, more than a hundred were wounded, and, as for the rest, they were made prisoners. Not many more than half a hundred got away when the order to retire was given. Amongst the captives was Hector Macdonald, then a second lieutenant who had just won his commission. He fought furiously at the head of a little section, until every man except himself was either slain or wounded.

I watched until the fight was ended; then, sick at heart, I went back to the marquee and the camp and heard, first-hand and hot from the lips, the details of the tragedy. Next day a burial party went up the hill, and put the dead to rest in one huge grave.

You ask me what I think was the cause of the disaster. Well, my business is not to theorise—I leave that to more responsible people; but I was talking of Majuba with a very distinguished officer, and he put it this way: "You simply tried to bounce the hill—and you failed!"

There are one or two things I should like to add by way of finish to my sad tale. Only a year or two after Majuba, Boers themselves told me that when they saw us on the hill top they were satisfied that we could hold it, and accordingly they began to inspan, so that they could get away.

They suddenly changed their minds, however, and resolved to make that attack which they accomplished with such marvellous success.

But the bitterest blow of all came in a last shot, which was worse than all wounds—a taunt published in one of their chief newspapers. It ran:

"We fought you and beat you in the hills, and we beat you in the open; yet we had no artillery, and you had all the appliances of war."

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# BILLY'S GUIDING STAR.

BY RUBY M. AYRES.

*The . . . Story of . . a . . . . Love Match.*

THE mistake had been in calling him "Billy."

If the world had insisted on knowing him as plain "William"—the name with which his godfathers and godmother had endowed him at his baptism—it is more than probable that he would have followed in the footsteps of his estimable but highly uninteresting forefathers, and have remained a creditable, if narrow-minded, branch of the family tree.

But William obstinately refused to be anything but a "Billy."

No one quite knew who was answerable for the corruption. It was one of those things which come unawares, and which come to stay, for "Billy" he was, from the soles of his somewhat large feet to the crown of his uncompromisingly red head, to the end of the chapter.

If there had not been such an amount of undiluted blue blood in the family it would not have mattered, but for generations past Sextons had married and intermarried with Sextons, which was more than probably the reason why Billy, who was nothing if not progressive, determined to seek a wife in pastures new.

Billy was the eldest son, and consequently the prospective head of the house, and it was a great grievance to his lady-mother that his hair should be red and his stature that of a young Hercules, seeing that, according to the dreary gallery of family portraits, all the dead and gone Sextons had been pale-faced, dark-eyed, and gentlemanly.

Billy had run entirely off the rails.

His features were rugged, and his voice deep and rough; but he had the best heart in the world, and was a much nicer fellow away from home than he was under the maternal eye.

Billy's mother adored him, but she adored him with reservations, and she had even gone so far as to say—with great pathos—that she did not think he really *could* be her son; whereas, had anybody else dared to voice a similar sentiment, she would never have forgiven them.

When Billy was twenty-one there was a big gathering in the ancestral halls of Long Manor. Friends and relations by the score trooped in from all parts of the country to drink his health in wine that had been laid down for the purpose before he was born.

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And Billy's father made a speech, in which he alluded pointedly to the fact that it was time Billy took to him a wife; and Billy made another speech, in which he showed very plainly that, though he was quite willing to marry, he meant to choose for himself—which was decidedly Billy-ish, and which boded no good for the unmarried cousins and connections of all ages who had been paraded before his eyes under the maternal guidance.

The lady-mother clung fast to the tradition that Sextons married Sextons. But Billy's lip had taken a decidedly disdainful curl as he mentally noted the charm—or lack of charm—of his fair cousins; and it was when they had all departed dejectedly that Billy went into the pastures new.

On a horribly wet, rainy evening, his wandering feet led him to his Guiding Star.

She was a pantomime girl—and as Billy's lady-mother afterwards said, she might have known that it was exactly the sort of thing Billy would do.

Anyway, whether she might have known or not—Billy did it.

He sat spellbound in the first row of the practically empty stalls in the shabby suburban theatre, with his eyes glued to the slim, airy figure in silver tinsel and wonderful wings, who was styled on the programme "The Guiding Star" . . . Miss Lillian de Vere.

Billy's red hair rose on horrified ends as she floated to and fro across the darkened stage, with a great star on her head and twinkling stars all round her.

She would fall—he was miserably certain that in another moment he would see her crash down on to the boards—but she did not; and when presently a crescent moon rose out of the clouds behind her and she alighted on it and, leaning back as if she were cradled in a hammock, looked straight down at Billy and smiled, the son of all the Sextons rose to his feet and fairly shouted with delight.

The next night he went again, armed with a huge bouquet, and the next night he went round to the stage-door—and that was the beginning of it all! And the strange part of it was—except to Billy's simple and enraptured heart—that the girl was a nice girl.

She told him straightforwardly, as she stood at the door of her dressing-room the first night Billy summoned up enough courage to introduce himself, that she did not want to know him.

She played in the pantomime because there was no other way in which she could earn her living, and she was glad he liked her performance; but beyond that she did not want to have anything to do with him.

Billy looked like a great disappointed child as he stood in the dingy, badly-lit passage behind the stage and listened.

She was even prettier off the boards than on—and she was his first fancy.

Of course he had known lots of men—ne'er-do-wells—who spent the greater part of their lives hanging about stage-doors, but he had never done it himself, and it positively hurt him to see that this girl evidently considered him one of the class whom he despised with all his honest heart.

"I would not annoy you for all the world," he said humbly. "Perhaps if I can get someone to introduce me——"

The faintest smile crossed the girl's face.

"I have no friends in London," she said, "and we live in a road where I am sure you would not care to visit."

She mentioned a street which Billy had always regarded as a glorified Whitechapel; but he made an eager mental note of it and took his leave. As all the world knows, there is no greater truth than the saying, "Where there's a will there's a way,"—and Billy's will was strong and mighty.

He discovered that the girl's real name was Lillian Mathews, and close upon that discovery came the memory of an underpaid City clerk of the same name, whom Billy had once, after having been fog-bound with him for a couple of hours in a third-class railway carriage (Billy always travelled third; it was part of his Billy-ishness), insisted on standing a drink. To help kill time they had exchanged confidences, and Billy had learnt that his companion in distress earned the glorious sum of five-and-twenty shillings a week by addressing envelopes, and doing other similar things, and much impressed, Billy had remembered the name of the hero and the location of the City office—the scene of those glorious exploits—long after he had forgotten the drink. Nevertheless, on the strength of the drink, he looked him up and stood him another, and great was his delight to discover that The Guiding Star was the underpaid clerk's sister—by which it is proved that Fortune favours the brave!

After that, events moved rapidly, and on the day he had promised to return to the bosom of his family, Billy was sitting upon a wooden chair in the kitchen of the house in the glorified Whitechapel street making

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toast under the supervision of The Guiding Star herself. And this blue-blooded son of all the Sextons was radiant. He had never felt so much at home with anyone before as he did with this girl and her brother, and he made toast as if he had been born to the art, trade, and business thereof.

And the girl was happy, too.

To her, Billy's rough head and great, powerful shoulders were the most beautiful things on earth, and when she floated nightly across the dark stage at the surburban theatre and landed on the crescent moon, she saw nothing but his radiant face in the stalls—heard nothing but his ear-splitting applause.

Billy had vaguely announced that he had "some people somewhere in the country," and that his father allowed him enough to live on, but he did *not* tell them that he was heir to the old and painfully respected baronetcy of Sexton, and that his lady-mother was writing him daily and distracted letters, inquiring pathetically why, *why* he did not return.

He could never exactly explain to himself *why* he withheld these details, for the girl was undoubtedly a lady, and he was not the first prospective heir to a title who had wished to marry an actress.

Other men of higher rank than he had married actresses, he told himself, when he lay awake at night and wondered what on earth to do—and the newspapers had turned the whole affair into a charming romance, and practically made fortunes over it.

But Billy was sensible enough to see that a pantomime girl at a second-rate suburban house, who had not a line to say, and who only appeared twice during the whole of the performance, was not quite the same thing as a star in one of the principal West-end theatres, who could command her own salary and appear to the ecstatic gaze of ten-and-six-penny stalls clad in a Worth creation and ablaze with diamonds.

Not but what The Guiding Star was the best little woman on earth, but—but—Billy had a wholesome fear of his mother, and what he was pleased to call "scenes."

Once he mildly suggested to Miss Mathews that she should give up the pantomime and have a turn at something else, and from being first surprised, she grew angry, and then hurt and tearful, till Billy completely lost his head—or rather the last small piece remaining to him—and picked her up in his great arms.

That was during the daily toast-making, and after an ineffectual struggle to be dignified, The Guiding Star sat very happily and contentedly on Billy's knee by the fire, and they both held the toasting-fork and looked into each other's eyes, regardless of the fact that the bread was slowly burning to a cinder.

Then the underpaid City clerk came in, and he was told all about it, and he smiled in his tired, pale way, and said he was very glad.

And after tea, to celebrate the occasion, Billy took the girl to the theatre in a cab instead of the usual penny 'bus, and altogether they had a glorious time.

It was not till he was saying good-night to her in the dark passage of the little house, while the brother discreetly remained in the sitting-room with a halfpenny paper, that Billy fell out of his castle in the air—and it was The Guiding Star herself who, quite unconsciously, gave him the first push.

"I wonder if your people will like me?" she said dreamily from the region of Billy's breast-pocket.

And Billy landed on *terra firma* with an unpleasant bump, and thought of his lady-mother and his narrow-minded father, and all the dozens of blue-blooded, cold-eyed relations—and a cold shiver ran down his spine.

He moistened his lips, and tried to speak as if he meant what he was saying.

"Of course they will," he said, and for a moment had serious thoughts of adding that it would make no difference if they didn't—but he refrained.

He knew so well what lay before him, though he had wilfully shut his eyes to it. The eternal rows, threats, and intreaties—stronger men than he had before now gone under to petticoat rule over just such a matter.

Billy was not a weak man, but though his hair was red, and his voice and figure several sizes too big, the pride of race and tradition had been born in him, and though he would have fought the whole world single-handed for the sake of the girl at his heart, he quailed at the thought of his mother's tears and his father's wrath.

Still, it was no use looking for trouble, and things were going so beautifully, and he was so radiantly happy, that there seemed no immediate reason why they should alter.

And they probably would not have altered for quite a long time had not Billy's father come to grief in the hunting-field, and Billy's mother sent a frantic telegram to Billy to come home.

The telegram was served up at breakfast time with the eggs and bacon, and other

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things, and Billy had barely time to throw some things into a bag and tear off to kiss his Guiding Star, and catch the express home.

He had a very genuine affection for his father, in spite of the fact that he was a Conservative, and Billy considered him narrow-minded (Billy himself had extremely broad views—indeed, he was not at all sure that he wasn't a Socialist), and Billy's heart was full of anxiety as he drew nearer to the home of his inheritance.

And when he got there he found his father a dying man.

And the shock of it all, for the time, wiped away the memory of London, and The Guiding Star, and the underpaid clerk, and Billy remembered nothing but that his father was dying, and that in a few hours the weight of the responsibility, and the upholding of the family honour, would rest on his own shoulders.

Perhaps in a way it was only natural that Billy should forget; but had the situation been the reverse, and had The Guiding Star been away from Billy and in trouble, it is probable that she would have thought of him all the more—which is one of the greatest differences between a man and a woman.

So Billy sat by his father's side, and waited, and watched, and even prayed, though Billy was not religious, and had even been known to scoff at prayer, that he might be allowed to speak to him once more before he went down into the Great Silence

And in the evening, when the autumn sun was setting in all its glory of red and gold across the beautiful park of Long Manor, the dying man opened his eyes and rested them on Billy.

The faintest smile flickered over his face, and as his lips moved, Billy bent his great shoulders over the bed to catch the words.

"I'm—going—Billy. It's your—turn—now. The honour—of—the house—Billy. You'll not forget. Marry well—Billy. The old place wants—wants—money! Promise me—Billy—the honour of—the house——"

Billy's hand took the poor, wandering one in his great clasp. Billy's rough voice, rougher by reason of the sobs that struggled in his throat, broke the deathly silence of the room.

Alas! and alas! for the poor Guiding Star.

"I promise, father."

The heavy eyes closed, but yet, once again, before they shut for ever, they opened and turned blindly [illegible]

"The honour — of—the — house — Bil—ly——"

The Great Silence fell.

It was many days before Billy shook himself free of the torpor that had enwrapped his heart and brain since the morning he came home to find his father dying.

It had been shock after shock; for when, after the great funeral to which all the country-side had flocked, the blue-blooded, cold-eyed relations-in-law crowded back to Long Manor to hear the will read, and to dispute over any possible legacy, it appeared that the late baronet had left practically nothing.

Billy, sitting with pale face and dejected shoulders between his mother and the family lawyer, recalled for the first time his father's dying words: "The old place—wants—money—Billy——"

Bad speculations — borrowed money — mortgages.

It was the old story, and Billy realised dazedly that "the honour of the house" did, in very bitter truth, rest on his shoulders.

He shook hands with the many and indignantly disappointed relations, and listened absently to their condolences; and it was not until the heavy door of Long Manor had shut upon the last of them that Billy thought of his Guiding Star.

He stood stock still in the middle of the great dining-room, where the lawyer's black-coated clerk was stowing deeds and papers into a bag, and his heart felt like a stone.

Whatever future lay before him, *she* was lost to him for ever.

There was his mother to think of, and his sisters, and the honour of the family, and his promise to his dying father.

Billy stood looking down the great room, where the afternoon shadows were fast closing, in stunned silence.

The memories of those few weeks in London came rushing upon him like an overwhelming torrent.

The dingy, suburban theatre, the airy, delicate figure that had floated across the darkened stage, and straight into his heart; the small, cheery kitchen in the glorified Whitechapel street; the wooden chair on which he had sat to make the toast: the round tea-table with The Guiding Star smiling across it, and the pale, tired face of the underpaid clerk.

"God! God!" said Billy's heart.

He sat up half the night trying to write to her, but words seemed so inadequate to

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"I promise, father."

express the sudden anguish that had come to him with the awakening.

He had been like a man in a dream since his father's death, but now everything that he had determinedly put at his back had to be faced.

He rose from his desk to walk the room in frenzy.

Billy never did things by halves, and he felt now as if he were torn in twain. There was no help anywhere.

He must marry for money — money — money—everything pointed that way.

For the sake of his mother and sisters, for the sake of the family name and honour, that had never yet had the finger of scorn pointed at it; but he must sacrifice his own happiness.

Yes! but that was not all.

For himself he could have borne it; but what about the girl?

Billy cast himself down, and sobbed with his rough red head in his arms,

They had been so happy in those few days, and now it was all over.

But how could he tell her?

It was a fortnight since he had kissed her so hurriedly and rushed off to catch his train, and he had never once written.

Now he came to think of it, he had not even given her his address. What could she have thought of him? What had the pale-faced, underpaid brother been saying about him?

The thought tortured Billy, and drove him to frenzy.

He got up early in the morning and caught the first train to town.

When the cab turned down the little, dingy, glorified Whitechapel street, Billy leant his arms over the door and looked out like an eager schoolboy.

For a moment he forgot that they *could* only meet again to say good-bye, and remembered only the joy the reunion would be.

Then he fell back against the padded sides of the cab with an ashen face, for the windows of the little house stared at him blindless and curtainless, like unseeing eyes —the house was empty,

After the first moment Billy recovered himself, and went off to the theatre. A sleepy and shabby official looked at him with solemn eyes from the window of the dirty

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box-office. He did not know Miss Lillian de Vere's address, but he *did* know this was the last night of the pantomime, and that she was playing in it for the last time.

"There's a new one being produced next week," he volunteered; "but she ain't in it." He paused. "Perhaps you'll book a seat for to-night?" he added insinuatingly.

But Billy had gone.

* * * * *

When the curtain rose that night on the first scene of *The Star Gazer*, a pale-faced young man in evening dress was the sole occupant of the stalls.

He sat through the first scene with stoic philosophy; but when the lights were all turned out, and the curtain rose for the second time, the young man in evening dress rose to his feet in the darkness, and stood gripping the back of the seat in front of him, his eyes craned towards the stage.

Slowly, slowly, out of the darkness, came the light that Billy knew so well. Brighter and brighter it grew, till across the darkened stage floated the little, delicate figure so dear to Billy's heart.

For a moment he held his breath and watched, then he forgot that he was a baronet in his own right—forgot that he had come to tell his Guiding Star that they must say good-bye—and the theatre resounded with his applause and the "bravo! bravo!" of his thunderous voice.

And then—and then—— Billy never knew how it happened, but the fairy-like form shook suddenly, as if the wires to which she was suspended had received a violent shock. She turned her face with a startled expression to the audience, and then—and then—Billy fell on his knees and hid his face in the seat of the chair.

* * * * *

When he looked up again, the lights were turned up in the theatre, and the curtain was down.

Billy forced his way to the stage-door, and through the crowd of painted, frightened pantomime girls, till he reached the little group, in the centre of which lay The Guiding Star.

Her pretty head—oh, the irony of life!—was supported on the knee of a man in clown's costume, whose hideous face was white beneath all its painted absurdity—the gauze wings were trailing helplessly at her side.

Billy knelt down beside her, and the clown silently moved to make room; so it was with her head on Billy's great shoulder that Billy's Guiding Star opened her eyes.

"You have come, Billy," she said.

It was the last thing on earth that Billy had ever expected to find himself doing; but when the doctors told him that there was just a chance for The Guiding Star to live, he went straight out to a post office, and telegraphed for his mother. Partly because it was impossible to explain by telegram, and partly because Billy shrewdly suspected that she would refuse to come if she knew for what reason she was wanted, Billy suppressed it, and Lady Sexton arrived as speedily as steam and horses could bring her.

Since her husband's death, Billy had become the apple of her eye; and when he met her, wild-eyed and incoherent, and told her the whole story (not forgetting the wooden chair and the making of toast), as they drove from the station to his hotel, she actually melted into tears, and she and Billy cried together most comfortably.

"I know I can't marry her, of course," said poor Billy with a big gulp. "But if only she could live——" He could trust himself to say no more.

And The Guiding Star did live. She cheated the ugly, grim spectre of death, which for many days and nights obstinately refused to leave her bedside, and under the skilful hands of Billy's mother came slowly back to beautiful life.

But the further from death the girl struggled, the more wretched did Billy become. Sometimes he told himself despairingly that it would not have been so hard to know that she was dead, and out of reach of everybody in the world besides himself, as it would be to know that she was living, and that he might not have her.

"Billy," said Billy's mother one day, finding her son pacing up and down the private sitting-room they had engaged at the hotel, "the doctor said this morning that you might see Lillian; but unless you look more cheerful, I really cannot allow it."

Billy turned on his mother roughly.

"See her!" he echoed. "What's the good of my seeing her? I've got to say good-bye to her. I can't marry her—I *won't* see her!"

Billy's mother crossed the room, and stole comforting arms about his unhappiness.

"Billy," she said, and there was a tenderness in the voice of his lady-mother that Billy had never before heard, "supposing I say that—I should be very glad to welcome her as my daughter? What then?"

Billy gave a great start. Then he shook himself free, with a poor attempt to laugh.

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"We can't all live on love, mother!" he said gently.

But Billy's mother smiled, as if she knew a secret that was not unpleasing.

"But Billy," she said, "supposing Lillian were rich?"

"She was paid two pounds a week," said Billy, with gruff sarcasm.

"But she is not going back to the theatre," said Billy's mother. "And — and — sometimes there are wealthy uncles *out* of story books who die in a foreign land, and leave their money to nephews and nieces!"

"*Lillian* never had one," Billy said with hopeless impatience. "Besides—" he was going to add grandly that, even if she had, he was not going to live on his wife, but he checked himself, for he knew that he would give up his pride or anything else demanded of him, if only he might hold his Guiding Star in his arms again, and call her his wife.

"*Lillian* never had one," he repeated.

"Yes, dear," said Billy's mother. "Yes, she had!"

* * * *

So Billy and his Guiding Star were married, and the papers made a tremendous fuss and romance about it, and told a lot of anecdotes that were not in the least true, and reproduced a lot of photographs that were not in the least like either of them, and altogether made a lot of hay while the sun shone.

And the pale-faced brother left the dingy City office and came to live in the country, and went hunting with Billy's blue-blooded cousins.

**"What's the good of my seeing her? . . . I can't marry her—I *won't* see her!"**

And Billy's mother was entirely happy because the family honour did not seem to suffer in the very least, and because she considered that it was entirely her own doing that everybody was so comfortable.

And if the blue-blooded relations occasionally made uncalled-for remarks about actresses and other things, Billy did not care, because he had got his Guiding Star—and The Guiding Star did not care because she had got Billy—and so they were as happy as the day was long.

But though there were doubtless many wooden chairs in the kitchen at Long Manor, history does not relate that Sir William Sexton ever again made toast!

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# MR. X HIS PAGES.

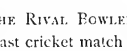
*Being—Popular Pages of Perplexing Problems, Puns, Puzzles, and Playful Posers, Propounded for the Perusal of Perspicacious Persons, Particularly those Pining to Procure Puzzle Penknives, Puzzle Purses, and Packs of Playing Cards.*

Puzzle Penknives, Puzzle Purses, or Packs of ROYAL Playing Cards, will be given as prizes to readers who forward new puzzles, problems, or other tricks which are inserted in this feature. Any readers communicating with "Mr. X," and wishing for a reply should inclose a stamped, addressed envelope. All letters should be addressed to "Mr. X" (care of THE ROYAL MAGAZINE), 18 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

## THE RIVAL BOWLERS.

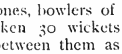
UP to the last cricket match of the season, Smith and Jones, bowlers of the same club, have each taken 30 wickets for 80 runs. The rivalry between them as to who shall secure the best average for the season is very great. In the result Smith gets 5 wickets for 20 runs, Jones 4 wickets for 17. Which has the better average for the season?

Most people will at once jump to the conclusion that Smith has. But work it out by decimals.



## QUERY.

My first makes company;
My second shuns company;
My whole puzzles company;
What is it?



## TOO FAST.

BINKS MINOR: "Yes, you can brag about your pace. Why, I bet you five bob you can't walk a hundred yards in three minutes."

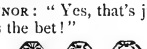
HINKS MINOR: "You must be an ass. However, I'll jolly well take your bet."

[They measure the required distance and Hinks walks it.]

BINKS MINOR: "There you are, I knew you wouldn't. Hand over your five bob!"

HINKS MINOR: "What! Why, I've done it in ninety seconds!"

BINKS MINOR: "Yes, that's just it. Three minutes was the bet!"



**Q. Why is a tight shoe like the summer sun?**
**A. Because it makes the corn grow.**

## "LETTER-ALLY CAUGHT."

BLACK (who has lately been studying witchcraft): "I say, Greene, do you know if you shut your eyes, turn round three times, then jump, you will find you are in Burmah?"

GREENE: "What utter rot!"

BLACK: "Fact, I assure you; try it. That's right! Now, you will see U R in Burmah—B-*U*-*R*-M-A-H.

## AN EARTHY PROBLEM.

A farmer employed a man to dig holes for some fencing. Each hole was to be 2 feet deep, 3 feet square at the top, and 1 foot square at the bottom, and the man was to be paid at the rate of 1d. per cubic foot of earth removed.

When the work was finished the man asked for 10d. each hole, "for," said he, "the area at the top is 9 sq. feet and at the bottom 1 sq. foot, so that the average is 5 sq. feet, and being 2 feet deep I have dug 10 cubic feet from each hole." "No," said the farmer, "the hole is exactly 2 feet square halfway down, or 4 sq. feet in area, and that by 2 feet deep gives only 8 cubic feet."

Which of the two was right, or were they both wrong?

**A NOVEL LIMERICK.**

**There was a young man of Bordeaux**
**Whose voice was as hoarse as a crcaux;**
**He went to the Zoo,**
**And they took him in, too,**
**So now he's a fixture,**
**What heaux!**

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### Q. and A.

"Why do Englishmen get so cross about the weather?"

"Because they live in a *temper*-ate zone."

"Right; and why are Irishmen so good-natured?"

"Is it because they take pleasure in 'Erin' (airing) their grievances?"

"No, it's because they constantly are dreaming of Dublin (doubling) their capital."

"Capital! Now, why do Welshmen quarrel?"

"Because they like a 'rare bit' of fun?"

"No, they like to hear the sound of wails (Wales)."

"Why is Hampton Court like a field of Indian corn?"

"One's of import, the other of importance."

"Wrong. It's because of the ma(i)ze there!"

### A Sharp Point.

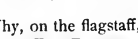
Jack: "I heard a good joke yesterday."

Fred: "What is it?"

Jack: "I saw a flag flying outside a field, so I asked why it was up and I was told there was a football match on. Funny, wasn't it?"

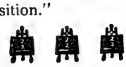
Fred: "Can't say I see it. Where's the point?"

Jack: "Why, on the flagstaff, of course."



### A Y's Remark.

If you really wish to make a man thoroughly mad, say to him: "Why is the last letter of the alphabet nearly?" Every time he asks "nearly *what?*" repeat your statement. When he begins to take down his gun, or to let loose the dog, explain yourself more clearly by pointing out that "Y is the last letter of the alphabet, nearly. That is to say, it would be last were it not that Z holds that responsible position."



### Proof Positive.

Brown: "I always thought you were an idiot, Jones, and now I can prove that yesterday you were off your head."

Jones: "Oh, you can, can you? What time was it, I should like to know?"

Brown: "About lunch time, I believe. You weren't *on* your head then, were you? Obviously you were off it. Sold again."



### For Mathematicians.

Ask someone to write down the largest number he can make with two 9's, and the chances are that he writes 99. But the wary mathematician, mindful of the rules of Indices, writes $9^9$, *i.e.*, 9 raised to the ninth power, which works out to the surprising result of 387,420,489.

**Q. What is the difference between a mouse and a young lady?**

**A. One harms the cheese, the other charms the hes.**

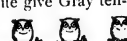
### More A B C.

Sentences relating to "Mr. X" and his merry men, each word of which begins with a letter of the alphabet, in order, continue to pour in. Here is another:

**A** Bright **C**ompetitor **D**eserves **E**ncouragement **F**or **G**iving **H**umorous **I**deas! **J**okes **K**eep **L**ife **M**erry! **N**ew, **O**riginal **P**rizes **Q**uickly **R**eward **S**uccess! **T**hus **U**rges **V**ery **W**ily "**X**" **Y**our **Z**eal.

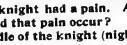
### A Coin Trick.

"Mr. X" knows perfectly well that guineas are no longer issued from the Mint. But supposing they were. And supposing that White, with only guineas in his pockets, met Gray, in whose pockets lay only half-crowns. How will White give Gray ten-and-six?



**Q. A certain knight had a pain. At what time and in what place did that pain occur?**

**A. In the middle of the knight (night).**



### A Puzzle for the Dusk.

(Time 12.45 a.m. Phlatte and Scharpe going home from a dance.)

Scharpe: "Have you heard my latest joke, old man?"

Phlatte: "No, what is it?"

Scharpe: "It's no good telling you, it is much too dark to see it."

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**RESULTS.**

The Rival Bowlers: Jones' average, 2·892; Smith's, 2·857.

Query: Co-nun-drum.

An Earthy Problem: They were both wrong; the man dug 833 cubic feet.

A Coin Trick: By White giving Gray three guineas and taking twenty-one half crowns as change.



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# BAGGED.

*The Story of a Honeymoon Journey, Two Bags, and a Misunderstanding.*

By C. Randolph Lichfield.

Quietly, without whistle or jolt, the great train started out of the station.

"And they call this London the heart of the civilised world!" said the girl, drawing in the corners of her pretty mouth expressively. "Tell me, Dick! What is there about us that attracted so much attention? Am I festooned with rice, am I trimmed with slippers, that everyone should know we're just married?"

"Oh, it's all right now, darling—we're off," returned the man, sighing gratefully. "And I don't suppose people stared half so much as we imagined; one is naturally hypersensitive at such a time as this, and one reads all sorts of meanings into the most casual glances. Besides, you always did attract a good deal of attention, and you met every glance with such angry eyes—you——"

"Didn't it make you angry to be stared at so insolently—to feel that everyone was secretly amused because they imagined we ——"

"It was confusing," he admitted, leaving his corner seat and dropping down beside her, "but I comforted myself with the reflection that no one was half so interested in us as we fancied."

"Don't!" she protested, drawing away. "Someone might see us from a back window of those houses. Oh, you don't know! Just think! Someone might even be cinematographing the train as it passes—you know the style of thing—and in a few days half London might be laughing at us in the act of kissing on a white sheet at some music-hall!"

"Oh, that's fine!" he laughed. "Imagination could not go further. If you're going to act up to such possibilities we ought certainly to have started by different trains, completely disguised, and met by appointment at some such unfrequented spot as a Yorkshire moor. By the way, dearest, in your eagerness to take cover in this compartment you nearly lost your dressing-bag."

"Did I?" she inquired, glancing at the bag reposing in the opposite rack. "But in your eagerness to get those magazines you nearly lost your bride, sir."

"Yes, but if I hadn't gone to the bookstall I shouldn't have seen your bag. It was the merest chance. A fool of a porter had picked it up with somebody else's luggage, and in another instant would have carried it away. I didn't give him time to recognise his mistake, I can tell you; I just snatched it and dived in here."

"That was lucky! But—— I hope our silly porter didn't forget anything el——" She glanced up at the rack above her head, and gasped: "Dick!"

He looked up and drew a quick breath.

She broke into a merry peal of laughter.

"Oh, Dick, Dick—*dear* Dick, what *have*

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you done? Started married life as a luggage-snatcher!"

He rose gravely and took down the dressing-bag from above her seat.

"It's an extraordinary thing," he muttered, with a blank look, glancing at the other bag in the opposite rack.

"What *will* you do? It—it really is funny. How you must have surprised that poor porter!"

"Yes," he said smiling, "I expect I did. But there is every excuse; they're exactly alike."

"No doubt there are hundreds, if not thousands, like them. I wonder what that other bag contains."

"Something its owner has immediate need of, I'll bet my boots," he said grimly, putting the bags together on the seat and contemplating them. "It's a most regrettable incident, but perfectly excusable."

"I think mine is a shade darker, don't you?"

"Which is yours?"

"That one, isn't it?"

"I don't know."

"But that's the one you took down last, I'm sure. Don't move them! Put it—oh, now you've done it! This—this, I think—no, I don't know! Silly fellow, why didn't you leave them as they were?"

"I think this is yours."

"No; you put mine down here; then you moved it there, and——"

"Where's the key of yours? That'll settle it!"

"Haven't you got my keys? I sent Madge down to give them to you while I was dressing."

"Confusion thrice confounded!" he murmured. "She gave me no keys."

"But, Dick—my trunks!"

"Oh, we shall have to burst them open, that's all. Let us confine ourselves for the present to the problem of these bags. Can't you call to mind any characteristic possessed by your bag? Look at that scratch! Might have been done by Johnny with a three-pronged fork."

"No; I don't recognise it."

"But that's just the sort of thing Johnny would do to a nice-looking new bag, isn't it?" he said hopefully.

"M—yes; but other people have Johnnies and three-pronged forks."

"Well, I don't know! It's infernally——"

"Dick!"

"Sorry, dearest, but it is. It's our manifest duty to hand the stolen bag over to the officials at our first stop—Bath. If we hand either of them over as things are, it's bound to be yours; if we break one open to solve the problem it's certain to be somebody else's, and if we——"

"Oh, don't go on like that!" she laughed. "There must be some way out of the difficulty. Shake them. There was a bottle of eau de Cologne in mine; perhaps we may hear it click against—yes! that's mine."

"Wait a bit," he said, shaking the other bag. "There you are, you see!"

"But it didn't sound quite——"

"Oh, I wouldn't swear it was a bottle, but it might be." He shook the bag again, more violently, and yet again with much energy. Presently something within the bag cracked against something else like glass. "That sounded like a bottle, didn't it?"

"It may have been the fittings of the bag," she suggested.

"Oh, come!" he cried impatiently, taking a pen-knife from his pocket. "At the worst I can indemnify the owner."

He sat down, and began cutting at the bag nearest him.

"Don't be too reckless," she said, watching him.

"Recklessness is the child of despair," he answered sententiously, hacking away viciously. Presently he turned up a corner of the leather, and tore at the kid lining. A minute later he inserted a finger and thumb into the openings and drew out——

"That's mine—my Valenciennes collarette!" she cried, snatching it from him. "Oh, Dick—ruined! Cut to pieces! And it was worth eight guineas!"

"Oh, you'll soon stitch that together, and we've solved the problem."

"At the cost of eight guineas and a forty-five-shilling bag!" she cried pathetically. "We're not millionaires, you know."

"It can't be helped," he assured her cheerfully. "We know which bag to hand over at Bath, and that's the great thing, dearest."

But the girl was not so satisfied. She folded up the lace trifle with a melancholy air, and there were tears in her eyes. He drew her gently down beside him and kissed the tears away; and gradually her smiles came back.

It was growing dark when the train ran into Bath station. The down-platform was crowded.

Dick lowered the window, drew the misappropriated bag ready to hand, and leant out.

"Hi, you! Porter! Hi, porter!"

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They were right in the front of the train and the wind coming from the rear carried his voice away. Everybody's attention seemed to be directed to the middle and rear portions of the train, just as he had expected when he selected a compartment forward.

"Hi—here, porter! Here, I say! . . . . Stupid idiot! I shall have to get out, dearest. Sit still and don't let anyone see you, or we shall have the carriage full!"

He picked up the bag and got out, closing the door after him, knowing that an open door generally attracts passengers seeking compartments.

He ran a few yards down the platform and tried to engage the attention of a porter, but the man was pre-occupied. He tried another who was either deaf, stupid, or in league with the Fates conspiring against him. Suddenly he thought of the cloak-room, and hurried towards an opening over which the sign of that department was painted in bold letters. Approaching the barrier he was stopped and startled by someone grabbing his arm.

"This your bag?" said a gruff voice in his ear.

Flurried and annoyed as he was, an affirmative answer slipped off his tongue before he had time to think, and his attempt to correct himself and explain matters was nipped in the bud by his accoster, apparently a plain-clothes officer of the station police.

"You'll have to come along to the station-master's office," said the man more gruffly.

At that moment the shrill whistle of an engine rang through the station. Dick looked round and saw the train moving. He dropped the bag and started to run, but was instantly stopped by a pair of strong arms being thrown round his waist.

"Let go, you idiot!" he cried angrily. He wrested himself free and bounded forward. But the man clutched him again, and they fell heavily on the platform together as the rear of the train disappeared out of the station.

"You shall pay dearly for this," he panted as he rose, and found himself surrounded by porters, inspectors, and passengers.

"It's six months at least for you," retorted his captor. "A clearer case I never handled."

"Where's the station-master? Fetch the station-master!" Dick demanded hotly, brushing the dust from his clothes.

"You'd better come quietly to the office," suggested an inspector. "We don't want any scenes on the platform."

"Bring that bag, then," said Dick authoritatively. "Where's my hat? . . . Thanks."

Escorted by the police-officer and a couple of porters, and followed by half-a-dozen curious passengers and newspaper boys, he made his way to the office of the station-master, who was absent at the moment, and in search of whom an inspector went in a leisurely manner, which made Dick think some of the wickedest words that ever entered the mind of man on his wedding-day; for how on earth was he to get in touch with his wife and calm her fears?

While he paced up and down the little office waiting for the station-master, the inspectors and police-officer examined the bag carefully, and compared it with a telegraph message in the police-officer's possession.

"Oh, it's the bag right enough," said the latter in an undertone. "The message says it contains valuable jewellery. That remains to be seen. Snatched out of a Paddington porter's hand, if you please—cool as you like."

At that moment the station-master—a mild-mannered, elderly man—hurried in, followed by the inspector who had gone in search of him. Dick started at once to protest, to demand, to explain. The police-officer started simultaneously to accuse, the inspectors to corroborate. It would have been wonderful indeed if the station-master had understood.

"One at a time, please!" he pleaded. "Do you claim this bag as your property, sir?"

"I was telling you! I snatched it from a porter at Paddington believing it was my wife's which he had taken in mistake, and I was about to seize the first opportunity of rectifying my error——"

"You said it was yours!" interrupted the policeman.

"I was flurried and you wouldn't let me correct myself."

"It certainly appears to be the bag referred to in the message," said the station-master mildly.

"It is; I admit it," said Dick, and he hurriedly explained the whole affair; who he was and why he had tried to escape the police-officer, and demanded to know what the station-master was prepared to do to enable him to overtake his bride.

"Is there anyone in Bath you could call upon to identify you?" inquired the station-master. "It's—er—rather serious, you know; we are advised that the bag contains a quantity of jewellery."

"I know no one in Bath, and I have—no, I've nothing on me to bear out my statements. Of course, my wife could do so, and

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her bag would show you how the mistake occurred; while my luggage contains plenty of things to prove my identity. But how the blazes ——"

"You say you were going to Weston. Where's your ticket?"

"Left in my overcoat pocket in the train."

"Well, I don't see what we can do," said the station-master dubiously.

"Telegraph to the rear guard of that train at Bristol to tell my wife to return here at once with her luggage."

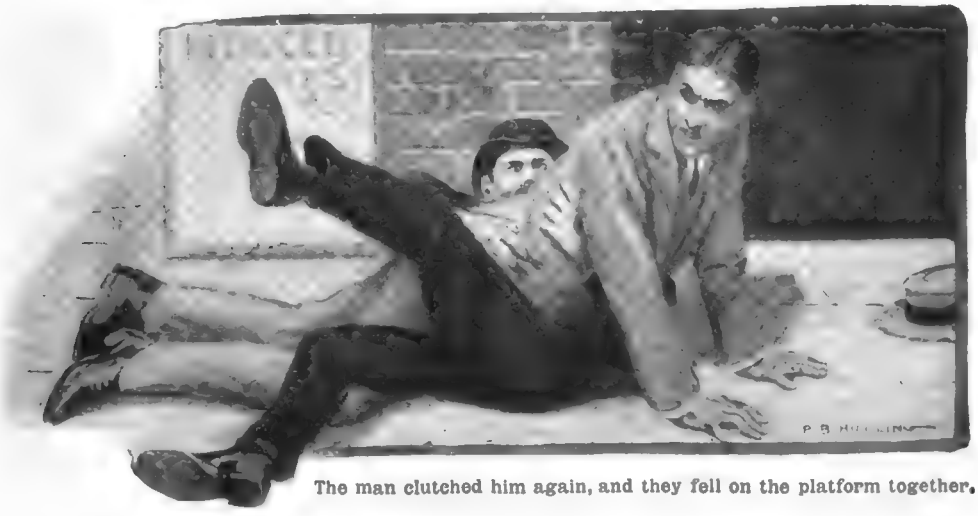
"But the train's already left Bristol—it's only a matter of ten miles from here, you know."

"Well, telegraph to the next stopping-place. I'll telegraph to the hotel at Weston where we I hope we may soon be able to set matters right."

Dick flung himself into a chair, and, having obtained permission, lit a cigar. It is impossible to set down his thoughts, for they were too incoherent and chaotic and indiscriminate.

For rather more than an hour he sat smoking cigar after cigar, a prisoner. At something past eight a telegram arrived for the station-master.

"Ah," said the official, after reading the message. "Guard declares that the only lady to whom my telegrams could refer left the train at Bristol, but without claiming a quantity of luggage which he believes belonged to her."



The man clutched him again, and they fell on the platform together.

had engaged rooms. She will probably go straight on, expecting me to follow by the next train."

"Yes, we can do that. Here, Gibbons!" The station-master wrote out a telegram and Dick wrote out another. "In the meantime," said the former, handing the two forms to an inspector, "I shall have to detain you."

"You'll do so at the company's risk, of course, you understand," retorted Dick sharply. "And the circumstances of my detention would appeal to the sentiments of a jury in a question of damages. I shall submit only after most emphatically protesting."

The station-master shrugged his shoulders deprecatingly, and by a wave of his hand dismissed the others.

"You can remain here, sir, where you will be more comfortable and private than elsewhere," he said conciliatorily to Dick. "And

"Good!" cried Dick delightedly. "She evidently got out to return here, or wait there for me."

"She would be here now if she had taken the first train back," said the station-master doubtfully.

Another telegram arrived, this one for Dick.

"Received wire," it ran. "Also one from lady saying detained at Bristol Station, asking you to go there and identify her.—Manager, Seabright Hotel, Weston."

"What the deuce does it mean?" cried Dick. "Detained at Bristol? Detained at Bristol? Identif—— Oh, Lord! Of course!"

It was plain as a pikestaff. She had alighted at Bristol, meaning to await him there or return to him, or to telegraph to him so as to get in touch with him. She had been seen with the dressing-bag and stopped. Naturally, in her agitated state of mind she had not been

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able to obviate suspicion, and the condition of the bag and the fact that she had not a key for it had——

His thoughts were interrupted by the arrival of yet another telegram; this for the station-master.

"I'm afraid—that's to say, I hope, an unfortunate mistake has indeed been made," he said, with a grave, official air. "This is from the Bristol station-master. He says: 'Woman detained here with bag supposed stolen at Paddington. Says her husband left train at Bath to restore actual bag stolen. Please advise.'"

"It—it—it's perfectly scandalous!" cried Dick fiercely. "It's the most infamous and abominable thing that ever happened! To think of that poor girl, just torn from her mother's arms, held up by the police at Bristol like a common felon, without a friend, momentarily expecting me to turn up no doubt, in her agony of mind having even to turn for help to a hotel-manager whom she has never seen."

"Please be calm, sir. I'm ready to——"

"Calm!" cried Dick, more fiercely than before. "Imagine what that girl has suffered! Image what she endured—the shame, the torment of humiliation!—before it could have occurred to her that you might be able to throw light on the matter. The wording of that telegram is enough to set one's blood aflame! They evidently discredit her tale at Bristol."

"I'm ready to do everything in my power to set matters straight," returned the station-master sadly. "And we've only acted within our strict rights. Indeed, if I——. But there, I must act on my own responsibility to prevent further trouble. I will wire to Bristol that they have made a mistake, and tell them to show the lady every consideration until you arrive. There's a slow train in half-an-hour."

"Half-an-hour and a slow train? You must give me a 'special'!"

"I'm sorry, but I——"

"Look here! Give me a special, sharp, and I'll waive my claim to damages against the company!" exclaimed Dick excitedly.

"Done!" cried the station-master.

Thirty-five or forty minutes later Dick sprang from a stumpy-looking little train on to Bristol platform. Five seconds later he was embracing his bride.

"Oh, Dick, it's too funny and awful!" she said, almost hysterically. "They arrested me like a thief and released me like a queen. Everyone's been so sweet and kind since the telegram arrived from Bath."

"My poor darling!" he murmured compassionately. "There's a train on to Weston in about twenty minutes. Where's the bag?" he added in a sepulchral undertone.

"Don't!" she said gasping, but her eyes laughing. "I've tied its contents into a bundle and left the horrid thing in the cloakroom. And—I've burnt the ticket!"

"Think of that poor girl, just torn from her mother's arms, held up by the police!"

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The book says it's a very simple matter to stop a child crying.

# THE NEW BABY.

*A Monologue.*

By May Isabel Fisk.

Come in, come in. You don't have to walk softly at all—we are bringing him up scientifically, and he is used to sleeping through any kind of noise. Red? Why, Clara, he's not red at all—he's a good deep pink; if he were any whiter he would be ghastly. Oh, no, it doesn't curl now, but it will later—at least Miss Barrow said she was sure it would. Oh, I don't know how she tells, but I think she's right. She's a perfect treasure. Well, he has a great deal for such a young baby—doctor said so, too—it's mostly on the back of his head and doesn't show when he has it under him. It's ever so much more than it looks—it's so fine it doesn't show for what it really is. And of course light hair never shows up so heavily as dark—anyone knows that. Miss Barrow said she thought there would be enough to comb before long.

Do look—isn't that sweet? He's smiling right in his sleep. What's that? It's a pain? Now, my dear Clara, I may not, like you, have had three, but I think I know a smile on my own child when I see it. I'm not so inexperienced as all that. There, he's moving. My dear, you don't have to talk softly to him, but would you mind speaking a little lower? It doesn't make the least difference—but——

There, he's smiling again—oh, what a shriek! And he shouldn't—it won't be his time for quite a while yet. Miss Barrow—Miss Barrow, now, why did he wake up? The book says he should sleep at least two hours after his feeding, and it won't be that for ten minutes. Now, why did he wake up? You don't know? Oh—well, just take him up and stop him, and then bring him back.

Now, my dear, isn't that enough to exasperate a saint? Here I am paying her enormous wages as an experienced infant's nurse, and she can't answer the simplest

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**Now, Edward, I want you to take him . . . you look as though you had lockjaw in every joint.**

question as to why he wakes up—and I have to call her Miss! And my doctor recommended her! Oh, yes, there is nothing the matter with his lungs. The doctor said that, too. I believe the people upstairs spoke about it also. They are too common for anything. Yes, it does sound loud—much louder than it really is. I hate a weak cry in a child myself, and——

Now, you know, it's very strange she can't make him stop. The book says it's a very simple matter to stop a child crying if you do the right thing for it. That's all very well, my dear, but such a young child can't want very many things, and doctor said he was positive she would always know. Of course, I'm not so terribly ignorant myself—I already know a great deal about it—I'm studying the book all the time when Miss Barrow isn't about. Would you mind handing it to me now? Just turn to page twenty-three, will you? You would think they would have anything so important as pains on the first page—on the cover if possible! There, I think I have it.

Miss Barrow, please bring him back. There, give him to me, you needn't wait. Well, I don't care, Clara, you can make all the fun you like of "A Mother's Guide," but Mrs. Forbes recommended it to me, and she brought up her three boys out of it. Well, I know they are, but you can't blame the book for that.

The book says turn them on their faces and pat their backs for a pain. I don't really know whether I had better look under "Pains" or "Cries"—he seems to have a combination. I'll just try patting him, anyway. It doesn't seem to be doing much good. The book says all young mothers are afraid to pat them hard enough. I'll do it a little harder. I wish you'd steady the book a little—it's difficult to do everything. What? You'll have to speak louder—I can't hear. Oh, I'm sure it's the right thing to do—Mrs. Forbes said you could always rely on the book.

Goodness, but he's getting an awful colour—just call Miss Barrow, please.

Why in the world didn't you tell me he had just had his bottle? I was treating him for the wrong cry! There, he seems to be getting easier now I've put him on his back. But really he doesn't seem to be behaving according to the book at all. Perhaps, with your Philip; but they are not all alike, I don't care who says so. And Arthur already has strongly marked characteristics. . . . Yes, five weeks next Tuesday. Doctor said so, too, and Miss Barrow agreed with him.

Ye-es, you can hold him—if you. . . . Why, of course, my dear, I know you have held babies before—don't be silly; but I mean nowadays they have different ways of handling them. Yours were old babies, and with the new babies everything is different. All microbes and things—you can't be too careful. Why, Clara, how horrid of you—

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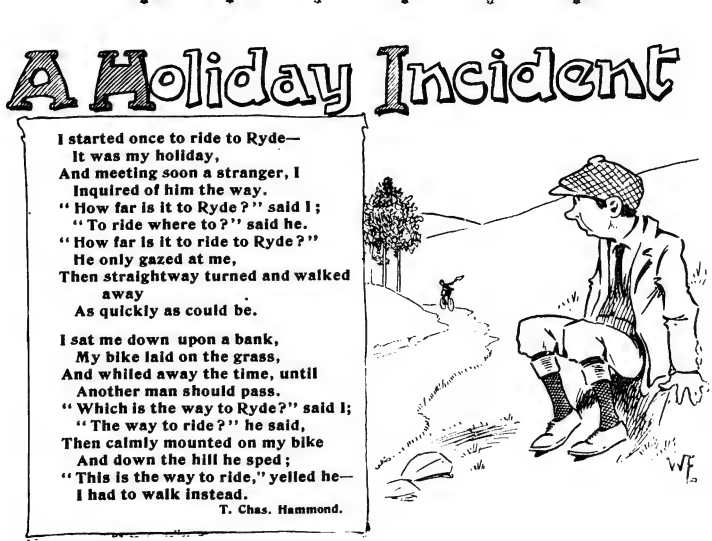
that isn't one bit like you—I didn't mean anything of the kind—but doctor says everyone has them. You don't want to hold him now? Well, just as you like; but I hope nothing I said offended you—no one can help it, you know—and we sterilise everything. Miss Barrow is awfully particular.

There's his dada's step now—you know he calls his father that. Of course not, Clara; he doesn't make a loud sound about it, but his mouth makes just the shape it would if he did say it, so I know what it means. Here he is. Oh, yes, dear, he's been lovely to-day, and more intelligent every moment.

What has he done? Oh, slept, and waked up, and eaten, and cried a little—not much, you know. Goodness, he's at it again. My dear Clara, I don't see how you can see any resemblance when his face is all that way—bunched up. I think he looks like a portrait I saw of Edward's great-aunt, but Miss Barrow thinks he looks like my sister. I think it's lovely to have him look like so many. It shows he will be very broad-minded.

Now, Edward, I want you to take him—he's almost quiet now. You needn't be afraid. Put your arms out. Not so rigid—you look as though you had lockjaw in every joint. There, isn't that nice? How do you feel holding your son? Well, I don't think that's a very parental way of expressing yourself. Look out, Edward! He won't lie out stiff like that. He's doubling up. Good Heavens, I caught him just in time! Another instant and he would have been folded up entirely. Oh, dear, he's off again—just hear him shriek. You can't hear anything else? That is a nice thing to say—you offended him. You had better call Miss Barrow.

Must you go, Clara? I'm so glad you enjoyed him—and I really think he behaved as though he were fond of you already, don't you? Do come in again soon—I enjoyed your call so much. I shall be so busy very soon—I am going to join the Mothers' Club!


A Holiday Incident
I started once to ride to Ryde—
It was my holiday,
And meeting soon a stranger, I
Inquired of him the way.
"How far is it to Ryde?" said I;
"To ride where to?" said he.
"How far is it to ride to Ryde?"
He only gazed at me,
Then straightway turned and walked away
As quickly as could be.
I sat me down upon a bank,
My bike laid on the grass,
And whiled away the time, until
Another man should pass.
"Which is the way to Ryde?" said I;
"The way to ride?" he said,
Then calmly mounted on my bike
And down the hill he sped;
"This is the way to ride," yelled he—
I had to walk instead.
T. Chas. Hammond.

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# CAP AND BELLS

### "WHERE THERE'S A WILL—"

MRS. RASH: "How do you manage to get your cook up so early?"

MRS. DASH: "Well, I hunted up a young and good-looking milkman, and pay him extra to come at five o'clock."

* * * * *

### FAIRLY SAFE.

CONJURER: "Now then, ladies and gentlemen, I will tell you how many hairs there are on the head of anyone in the audience who cares to ask me."

VOICE: "Well, how many have I?"

CONJURER: "Exactly 50,327,429, sir; and if you will count them and find I am mistaken, I will pay you £20."

* * * * *

### HE FELT EASIER.

NERVOUS PASSENGER (during thunderstorm): "Ain't it dangerous to be on a tram-car when it's lightning so?"

CALM PASSENGER: "Not at all. You see, the motor-man is a non-conductor."

And then the nervous one felt easier.

* * * * *

### THE MAYOR SCORED.

A country mayor found himself at a table in a large restaurant between two young men who began to make fun of him.

"I see, gentlemen," he said, "that you are making fun of me. But I assure you that I am neither a fool nor an ass."

"Ah," said one of them, "perhaps you are between the two."

"Exactly," was the prompt reply.

### EASILY ACCOMMODATED.

"Hold on," said the doorkeeper at the theatre, as the swain pushed past him, "you can't both go in on that; this ticket is for only one seat."

"That's all right, mister. One chair's been big enough to hold both of us many a time, ain't it, Liza?"

And in a cloud of Liza's best blushes they were gone.

* * * *

### A BELATED ACQUAINTANCE.

FIRST BENEDICT: "I only got to know my wife three months before I married her."

SECOND BENEDICT: "I only got to know mine three months *after* I married her."

* * * *

### ECONOMY.

There was a vivacious smile on her face.

"Oh, dear me," she murmured happily, "I've just got such a bargain!"

"How, dear?" inquired her friend.

"I sent a telegram—only sixpence for twelve words, and at least six of them were words of more than three syllables!"

* * * * *

### COMMON FAILING.

***"If there is anything I enjoy," said the man with the placid look, "it is to get on the river and lie about fishing."***

***"Couldn't you stay at home and lie about fishing, just as easy?" asked the stout man.***

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### AN UNLUCKY NUMBER.

"There darling, the last one," said he, as he started down the steps.

He had nearly reached the gate when she called him back.

"I've just been counting up," she said, "and that last kiss we took was the thirteenth, and that is an awfully unlucky number, you know."

When he finally got away, the score was thirty-seven.

* * * * *

### POOR ANIMAL!

LITTLE ELSIE (looking at the giraffe at the Zoo): "Oh, mamma! they have made that poor thing stand in the sun, haven't they?"

MAMMA: "Why do you say that, my dear?"

LITTLE ELSIE: "Look at all its freckles."

* * * * *

### THE YOUNG HOPEFUL AGAIN.

"I'd like to hear you play the violin, Mr. Tillinghast," said seven-year-old Tommy Dillingham, who was entertaining the caller.

"But I don't play the violin, Tommy."

"Then papa must be mistaken. I heard him tell mamma that you played second fiddle at home."

* * * *

### A FEMININE FAILURE.

FIRST SPORTSMAN: "Well, how do you like that new mare of yours?"

SECOND SPORTSMAN: "Oh, fairly well! But I wish I had bought a horse. She's always stopping to look at herself in the puddles."

* * * *

### MORE ECONOMICAL.

NEWRICH (to picture dealer): "I think on the whole I won't take the picture. I prefer spending my money on statues rather than on pictures, because you can see more than one side of a statue, and get your money's worth better."

* * *

### KNEW WHAT WAS WANTED.

CHARLIE YOUNGNODDLE: "Um, ah! er, er, er! r—! he! he—!"

JEWELLER (to his assistant): "Bring that tray of engagement rings here, Mr. Binks."

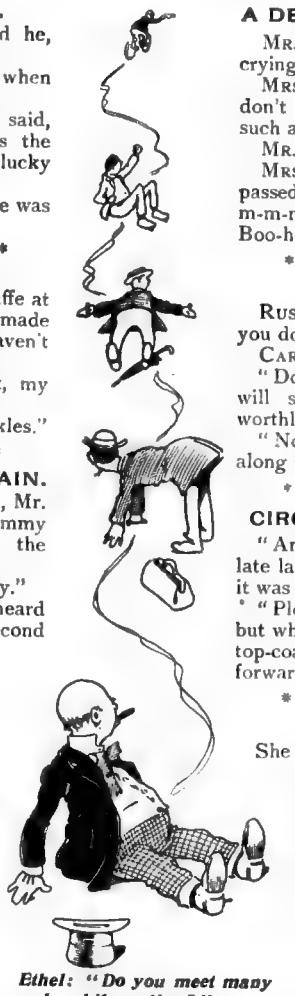
* * *

### THOUGHTFUL.

LEAVITT: "That was quite a good birthday present Theodore gave to Millie."

BOB: "What was it?"

LEAVITT: "A box of stationery, and all the envelopes were addressed to himself."



***Ethel: "Do you meet many people while cycling?"***

***Tom: "Oh, yes; I run across a friend occasionally."***

### A DEEP AND LASTING SORROW.

MR. SAYLES: "My dear, why are you crying?"

MRS. SAYLES (with sobs): "Oh John, don't you remember my new skirt I got at such a bargain last week for £3?"

MR. SAYLES: "Yes; what then?"

MRS. SAYLES (weeping afresh): "I p-p-passed Lacey's to-day, and they were all m-m-marked down to £2 19s. 11¾d. Boo-hoo!"

* * * * *

### IT KNEW.

RUSTY NAIL (in the street): "What are you doing here?"

CARPET TACK: "Waiting for a ride."

"Do you think any of these fine people will stop their carriages to pick up a worthless little thing like you?"

"No; but the first bicyclist that comes along will pick me up without stopping."

* * * * *

### CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE.

"Anna, my husband came home very late last night, can you tell me what time it was?"

"Please, ma'am, I don't know exactly; but when I got up this morning, master's top-coat was still swinging backwards and forwards on the peg."

* * * * *

### GALLANT.

She fell upon her knees in terror. "Kill me if you must," she implored, "But spare that which is dearer than life to woman."

The robber was moved.

"Fear not," he answered.

Upon his knightly honour he promised that her sleeves should not be crushed, whatever happened.

* * * *

### A BUSINESS MAN.

LADY: "This house would suit me, but there are not enough cupboards."

LANDLORD: "The number could easily be doubled."

LADY: "Very well, then, I'll sign the lease."

LANDLORD (half-an-hour later): "George, send a carpenter to that house to divide each of those cupboards into two."

* * *

### THE SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST.

FATHER: "I am inexpressibly shocked. Your mother tells me that you are engaged to three young men."

DAUGHTER: "Don't alarm yourself, papa. They are all football players, and when the season closes I can marry the survivor, you know."

SCENE: A SUNDAY SCHOOL.

***Johnnie: "I say, Miss Jones, I know now why you didn't want me to rob birds' nests last spring."***

***Miss Jones (who has on a new hat): "Why was it, Johnnie?"***

***Johnnie (gazing with admiring eyes at the hat): "'Cause you wanted the birds to grow big enough to wear 'em!"***

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*"Whatever are you doing to your new dolly, Marjorie?"*
*"Cutting her hair like Pa's—with a little hole on the top."*

## COLD WEATHER CHILLS CHARITY.

"How is business?" I asked the blind man.

"Poor," he answered, "very poor. This cold weather that makes my fingers and toes tingle, freezes the pockets of the people. They go rushing along in such a hurry that they don't see me any more than I do them; but I hear their feet hurrying by. I know just how it is. Their coats are buttoned up to their chins, and their gloved hands are thrust deep into their pockets. It's too much trouble and too uncomfortable for them to take their hands from their warm coats, unfasten half-a-dozen buttons, and take a penny from their pockets for me; so business is very bad."

* * * * *

## A SMART YOUNG MAN.

PAPA: "Ethel, I fear that young man is not enterprising."

ETHEL: "Yes, he is, papa. Hearing that Mr. Simpson had proposed to me by letter, he has just proposed to me by telegram, and I naturally take the first offer."

* * * * *

## A COMPLEX QUESTION.

SON: "And the missionary was eaten by the cannibals! Will the missionary go to Heaven?"

FATHER: "Oh yes."

SON: "Will the cannibal?"

FATHER: "No."

SON: "He'll not! Why, how can the missionary go to Heaven if the cannibal doesn't, when the missionary is inside the cannibal?"

## HE WOULD BE USEFUL.

MRS. SHEARS (in a jeweller's shop buying diamonds): "I wish my husband were here."

JEWELLER: "Is he an authority on diamonds, madam?"

MRS. SHEARS: "Not exactly; he is an editor, and knows paste whenever he sees it."

* * * *

## A CUNNING MAN.

MRS. YOUNGHUSBAND: "Why can't you stay at home this wet morning, George? Your employer can get along without you."

GEORGE: "I know it, but I don't want him to find it out."

* * * *

## HOPELESS.

FIRST BURGLAR: "What, back so soon, Bill! What did you get?"

SECOND BURGLAR: "Nothing; we're too late. There's a receipted plumber's bill a-layin' on the table!"

* * * *

## DOING HER BEST.

MR. WICKWIRE. "What is that woman across the way trying to sing?"

MRS. WICKWIRE: "'My Sweetheart's the Man in the Moon.'"

MR. WICKWIRE: "Well, if he doesn't hear her it isn't her fault."

* * * *

## MAKING BARGAINS.

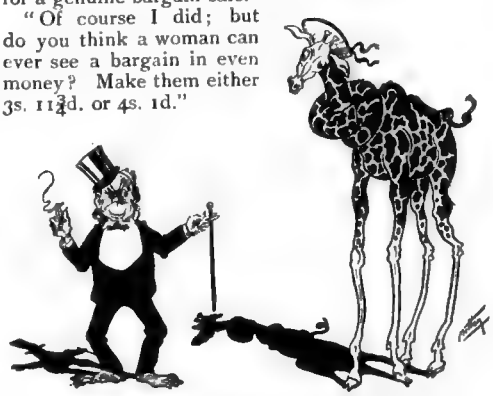
"Everything marked down to the lowest possible point?" said the merchant inquiringly.

"Everything," replied the clerk. "I put the 5s. silks at 4s., and everything else in proportion."

"At 4s.!" exclaimed the merchant. "Are you mad?"

"Why no, sir. You told me to mark them down for a genuine bargain sale."

"Of course I did; but do you think a woman can ever see a bargain in even money? Make them either 3s. 11¾d. or 4s. 1d."



*"Good-morning, Mr. Giraffe; whatever have you got your neck tied in a knot for?"*
*"Oh, that's to remind me to buy some new collars."*
*"And what have you got a knot in your tail for?"*
*"Why, that's to remind me that I've tied my neck in a knot, of course!"*

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### IT CUTS BOTH WAYS.

When you see a girl pasting a scrap-book full of cooking recipes out of the newspapers, you know pretty well that some young man is in a position to be congratulated, and yet, when you think of the recipes, you feel rather sorry for him, too.

* * * * *

### PEACE AT ANY PRICE.

BURGLAR: "Your money or your life."

SLEEPY FATHER: "Take both, but don't wake the baby."

* * * * *

### PATERNAL PROVOCATION.

I.

It is 10 p.m. They are seated in the parlour.

"No," she says, bowing her head. "Pa says I am too young to become engaged."

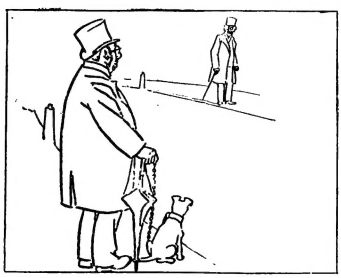
II.

It is just 1.30 a.m. They are still seated in the parlour.

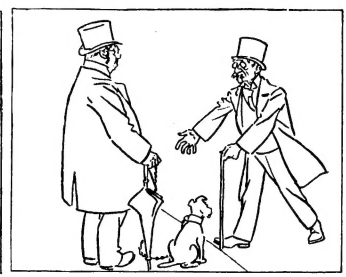
Suddenly, from somewhere upstairs, a gruff voice shouts: "Henrietta, if that fellow waits a little longer you'll be old enough to accept his proposal."

* * * * *

### THE MAN WHO WASN'T BLIND.—A STORY OF MISPLACED CONFIDENCE.



I.



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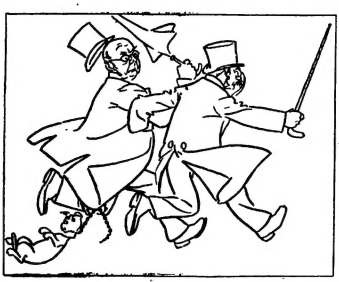

III.

IV.

### PROOF POSITIVE.

"You're pretty small," said the man, who was engaging some men to go on an exploring expedition with him. "I shouldn't think you had enough endurance to stand——"

"Endurance!" exclaimed the little man. "Why, sir, I've got a record for that."

"How so?"

"I put in a whole afternoon at a football match in the rain with a girl six feet tall, and held the umbrella over her head. If that doesn't show endurance I should like to know——"

"That's enough. You'll do."

### A GOOD REASON.

Two old friends on the street, locking arms, strolled slowly along, discussing various topics. Personal ones were touched upon at last, and, after exchanging family solicitudes for several moments, the Judge asked the Major:

"And dear old Mrs. ——, your aunt? She must be rather feeble now. Tell me, how is she?"

"Buried her yesterday," said the Major.

"Buried her? Dear me! dear me! Is the good old lady dead?"

"Yes; that's why we buried her," said the Major.

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### TO COMPEL BELIEF.

"It seems to me, Martha, that it is nothing but reckless extravagance putting that solid mahogany furniture in the nursery."

"No, it isn't anything of the kind," protested his wife. "The polish on that furniture is altogether too new. I haven't been able to make anyone believe that it was inherited from my great-grandmother. It will be all right after it's been in the nursery for a few weeks."

* * * *

### QUITE CORRECT.

**"Now, Johnnie," said his master,**
**"Let's see how you can add—**
**The last sums that you did me,**
**Were really very bad!**

**"Think carefully, and tell me**
**If I were to give you,**
**To-day, say, seven rabbits,**
**And then another two.**

**"How many altogether**
**Would you have, Johnnie, then?"**
**After a moment's counting,**
**The little boy said "Ten."**

**"You stupid little fellow**
**(Is the cane on the shelf?)"**
**"But please, sir," cried poor Johnnie,**
**"I've one at home, myself!"**

**Marion E. Weller.**

* * * *

### NOT HIS FAULT.

CUSTOMER: "Waiter, it is almost half-an-hour since I ordered that turtle soup."

WAITER: "Sorry, sir, but you know how slow turtles are."

* * * *

### A BIG INDUCEMENT.

"What induced her to tell you her real age?"

"It was her birthday party, and I was going to give her a kiss for each year."

* * * *

### PAPA WAS STUMPED.

FREDDIE: "It's always in damp places that mushrooms grow, isn't it, papa?"

PAPA: "Yes, my boy."

FREDDIE: "Is that the reason they look like umbrellas, papa?"

* * * *

### COULDN'T HAVE STOOD IT.

JACK: "Was yours a long courtship, old fellow?"

WILL: "Gracious, no! My wife had nine little brothers and sisters."

JACK: "Really. But what difference did that make?"

WILL: "What difference? Well, if you had to bribe a crowd like that to keep out of the drawing-room every time you went to see your girl, you would soon want to cut down the expense."

### THE OLD GENTLEMAN, THE NAUGHTY BOY, THE SNUFF-BOX, THE LADY, AND —THE SNEEZE.

### A REAL WOMAN.

Ready for all that might befal, the female detective prepared to venture forth on the track of the desperate criminal. At the threshold she paused and cast one more look back.

"Is my disguise on straight?" she asked.

* * * *

### NO NEED TO WORRY.

"Dear, dear! I left my watch upstairs and I feel too tired to go after it."

"Well, if you'll just wait long enough, it'll run down."

* * * *

### IT DIDN'T WORK.

"What on earth are you trying to do?"

"I was reading about cooking by electricity, so I hung the chops on the electric bell, and I've been pushing the button for half-an-hour, but it doesn't seem to work."

* * * *

### ALL FROM ABROAD.

NELL: "Nothing in this country seems good enough for Kitty. She goes to Paris for gloves, gowns, hats, and everything she wants."

BELLE: "Yes; she even goes abroad for her health."

* * * *

### FOOD FOR THE MOTOR.

"John is so absent-minded."

"What is the matter now?"

"He bought a load of hay for our motor-car."

* * * *

### THE REALITY.

**"Laugh, and the world laughs with you,"**
**I find is most untrue;**
**Just take a single instance,**
**And you will share my view:**

**You tell a funny story**
**Unto a group of friends,**
**You reach the point—relate it—**
**And snigger when it ends.**

**Then does the world laugh with you?**
**No, never in your life!**
**Cold silence falls until you**
**Can cut it with a knife.**

* * * *

### BILL OR HAT?

SHE: "Tell me, John, would you rather pay the butcher's bill, or pay for my new hat?"

HE: "The butcher's bill."

SHE: "Well, here it is."

HE: "What? Two pounds? Let me have the items."

SHE: "For meat, two shillings; for my new hat, the thirty-eight shillings the butcher lent me—making just two pounds."

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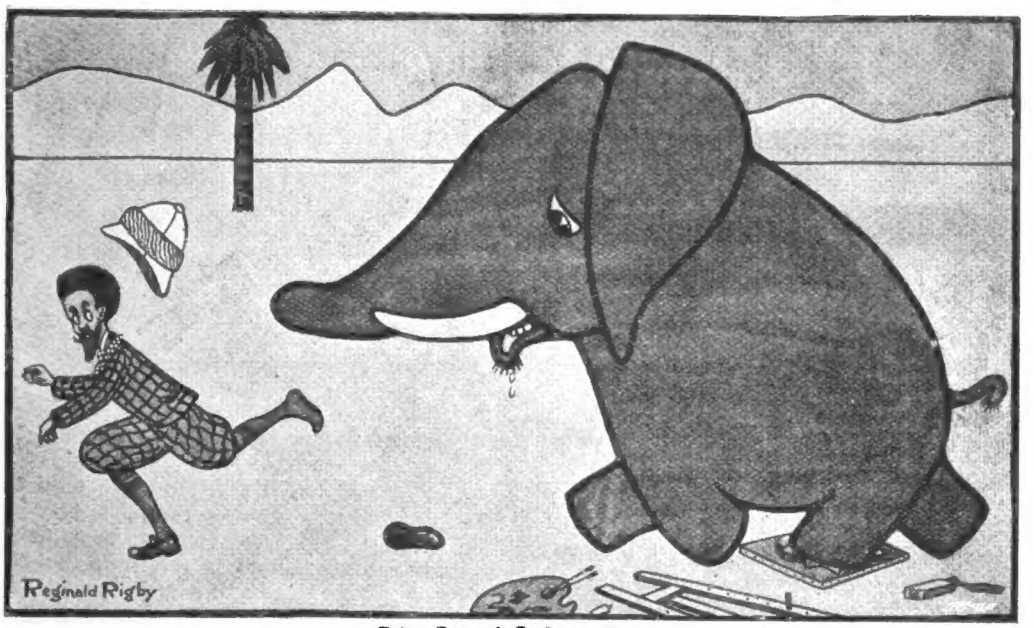


*Peter Pye, of Pecknam Rye.*

### PETER PYE, OF PECKHAM RYE.

A painter once of animals
There was, named Peter Pye;
His style was bad,
But yet he had
Great fame in Peckham Rye.

Though some think Landseer's stags are fine,
And love those bulls of Potter's;
Yet Peter Pye,
Of Peckham Rye,
Thought both those artists "rotters."

"An elephant in native state,"
Said Pye, in high-pitched stutter,
"Done on the spot
Would 'knock the lot.'"
So hied him to Calcutta.

Arrived in India, Peter Pye,
As fast as he could toddle,
With paints in hand,
Searched through the land
His elephantine model.

At last he spied an elephant
Whose ways seemed very winning;
So still he stayed,
That Peter made
A very good beginning.

But as the picture fast progressed,
The elephant grew bolder;
And when 'twas done
The beast, for fun,
Looked over Peter's shoulder.

And as it gazed, the elephant
Came very near to fainting,
But quickly put
Its heavy foot
Through Peter's parlous painting.

And o'er the desert, chased by one
Of India's largest fauna,
Poor Peter Pye
Wished Peckham Rye
Were only round the corner.

He never would have reached the coast
Had fear not lent him wings;
And Peter Pye,
At Peckham Rye,
Now paints much safer things.

A dog, perhaps, or else a cat
(For Peter's learning sense),
Or sunset sky
O'er Peckham Rye,
Or else his garden fence!

REGINALD RIGBY.

* *

### THE LATEST VOICE PRODUCER.

BILL: "I'm making money selling mice."

JILL: "Whom do you sell them to?"

BILL: "The professor of music in the next street."

JILL: "What on earth does he want mice for?"

BILL: "Why, for trying the young ladies' voices!"

### EXPLAINED.

***You would never think to look at this man that he had just been reading some light literature, but he has—the gas bill!***

### DOING AS HE WAS TOLD.

"I is—" began Tommy, when his teacher interrupted him.

"That is wrong; you should say 'I am.'"

"All right," said Tommy. "I am the ninth letter of the alphabet."

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# MR. EDITOR —HIS PAGE.

*Some Remarks on Two New Series, Poets, and Picture Paragraphs.*

### THE QUESTS OF PAUL BECK.

So here's the first of the Beck stories. On page 409 Mr. McDonnell Bodkin opens the series with a very ingenious yarn. Of course, you will read it. But I want you to do more. I want you to let me know what you think of Mr. Beck's first quest. It won't give you much trouble. Just scribble a word or two on a postcard. Whether your opinion is condemnatory, critical, or approving, it is certain to be of value to me. At any rate, I would very much like to have it.

### HOW TO BECOME BEAUTIFUL.

Paul Beck, with his adventures, is not the only striking novelty which I have the pleasure of presenting you with this month. On page 446 you will find an article, written by one of the greatest beauty doctors in the world, on the culture of beautiful hands and arms. This article is also the first of a series, which might appear under the general title "How to Become Beautiful." Each article deals with some subject connected with a woman's appearance (a matter of considerable importance to many women I am told), and is full of really practical advice, and profusely illustrated with photographs. Men are specially advised not to skip these articles. Who knows when the information contained in them may prove useful? And, then, the accompanying photographs are invariably worth considering. The girls who posed for them were chosen for their looks.

### POETS AGAIN.

Several letters have reached me lately commenting facetiously on my remarks concerning poets in a recent number of the ROYAL, and questioning my sincerity when I said that poets could make quite a tidy sum of money with their verses provided they possessed common sense and aptitude for business. I was perfectly sincere, and I told you at the time that I was acquainted with one or two such bards. Indeed, three of these gentlemen happen to be on my staff. One writes very serious and high-falutin' poems, the second (who, by the way, is not a gentleman, but a lady) verses sentimental and humorous, the third, humorous verses pure and simple. All three bards manage to turn their songs into golden coins—even the serious and high-falutin' bard!—because they go about their work in a business-like fashion, and study the public they write for.

### PICTURE PARAGRAPHS.

You don't send me in as many "picture paragraphs" as I should like, and I think the reason is that you are under a misapprehension as to what is suitable, and what is not.

What so many contributors to this feature seem to imagine is needed is photographs of archæological remains—an ancient carving on a church, an aged tombstone, or something of the kind.

Now, I ask you, are these the sort of pictures that would arrest your attention when turning over the pages of THE ROYAL? I think not.

What would make you pause and look again is, for example, the photograph entitled, "A Smiling Cat," included in this month's Picture Paragraphs.

It's not only curious, it's pretty and funny.

Send me pictures like that. I, on my part, promise to pay you well for them.

### OUR CENTURY.

Many thanks for the congratulations so many of you were kind enough to send me on the hundredth birthday of the ROYAL.

I note with pleasure that all who wrote described the ROYAL as their favourite magazine.

May it long remain so!

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